

# Saving Energy and Making Work Simple

When recovering from an illness or surgery, or when faced with coping with a chronic illness, balancing rest and activity is very important. Saving energy allows you to accomplish every day tasks of daily living. It may be necessary to modify how and when you do a task in order to not put unrealistic work demands on your body. The way you do a job is as important as what you do.

Remember to plan, prioritize and pace yourself through each task. **Plan** out your daily schedule. **Prioritize** your list of tasks so you get the most important things done first. **Pace** yourself so you can do more through the day. This will help you be able to get things done even though it might take you more time.

## When doing a task:

- Plan ahead to avoid rushing and becoming too tired.
- **Prioritize** your tasks. What things must be done today? Do the most important tasks first.
- Standing takes more energy than sitting.
- Work done with your arms takes more energy than work done with your legs.

Learn more about your health care.

- Work done right after a meal causes more demand for oxygen to your heart. Wait 30 minutes after eating before doing a task.
- Extremes of heat and cold have a dangerous affect on the heart. Avoid doing activities in temperatures above 80 degrees F with humidity and below 20 degrees F.

## **Work a little easier to save energy:**

### **Pace Yourself**

- Rest, before you feel tired, for 20 - 30 minutes at least twice a day. If you get tired, stop and rest for 15 minutes whether you have finished the task or not.
- Alternate easy tasks with hard tasks.
- Nap if you are planning to stay up late. Get at least 6 - 8 hours of sleep each night.
- Do not rush. Allow enough time for each activity.
- Spread out activities over the entire day.
- Accept situations you cannot change and use your energy for things you can change.
- Hire help.

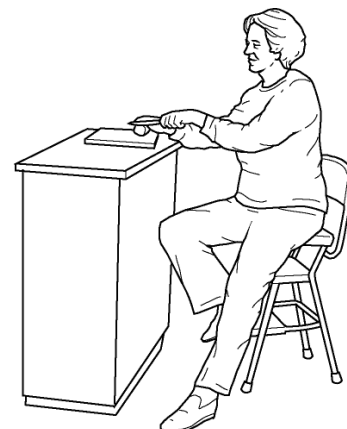


### **Use labor saving methods and devices**

- **Sit To Work** as much as possible. Avoid crossing your legs which interferes with blood returning to the heart.

#### **Examples:**

- ▶ Sit at counter / table to prepare food
- ▶ Use riding mower
- ▶ Use stool at work bench



- ▶ Sit to dress, shave, do hair, put on makeup, dry off after a shower
- ▶ Sit to iron
- ▶ Use a shower bench to sit and a hand-held shower head

- **Organize Work Areas**

- **Examples:**

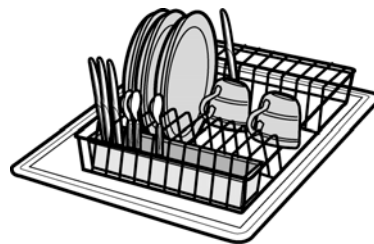
- ▶ Keep cleaning materials on each floor
- ▶ Store garden tools in the garage
- ▶ Store shaving equipment and cosmetics near the sink and mirror
- ▶ Store seldom used equipment out of the way
- ▶ Store frequently used items in the kitchen at chest height to avoid bending and stretching



- **Eliminate Unnecessary Work**

- **Examples:**

- ▶ Let dishes soak instead of scrubbing
- ▶ Use commercial prewash instead of scrubbing
- ▶ Air dry dishes rather than hand dry
- ▶ Wear no iron permanent press clothes
- ▶ Use a dishwasher
- ▶ Use long handled mops, dusters, and dustpans



- **Use Automatic Or Electric Appliances**

**Examples:**

- ▶ Use electric can opener, mixer, clothes dryer, sander, riding mower, electric saw, dishwasher
- ▶ Use your cruise control when driving
- ▶ Use a rubber mat or wet towel under your mixing bowls to help steady them while stirring or mixing
- ▶ **Cut Open Sealed Bags; Do Not Tear Them**
- ▶ **Use Good Lighting And Ventilation**
- ▶ **Work Relaxed**

- **Use Wheels To Move Things**

**Examples:**

- ▶ Shopping cart for groceries
- ▶ Garbage can on wheels
- ▶ Cart for cleaning or repair supplies
- ▶ Move heavy bags, boxes with a dolly
- ▶ Cart to move laundry



- **Use Both Hands For Efficiency**

**Examples:**

- ▶ Lifting objects from oven or refrigerator
- ▶ Both hands to lift and push objects

- **Use Proper Body Mechanics**

**Examples:**

- ▶ Slide rather than lift
- ▶ Relieve back strain by keeping one foot up on a low stool while standing
- ▶ Use good posture when driving
- ▶ Use an elevated toilet seat
- ▶ Do not lean forward unsupported, instead rest your elbows on counter tops.
- ▶ Bend at the knees to lift



- **Shopping Tips**

**Examples:**

- ▶ Make a list first
- ▶ Organize list by store aisle
- ▶ Shop at less busy times

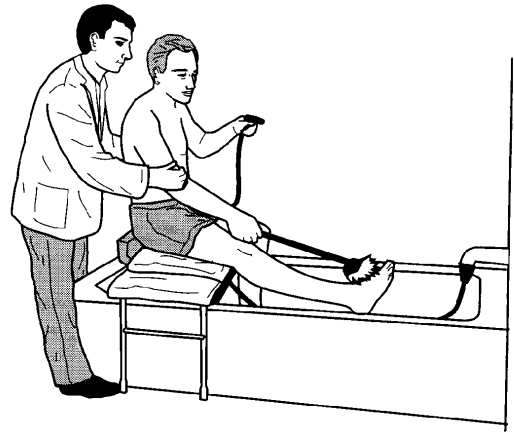
- **Dressing and Bathing Tips**

**Examples:**

- ▶ Wear button up clothing instead of pullover clothing
- ▶ Wear loose fitted clothing for easier breathing sit while putting on shoes and socks
- ▶ Wear slip on shoes and use a long-handled shoe horn and sock aid
- ▶ Use a terry cloth robe instead of a towel to dry off



- ▶ Use a shower bench to sit and a hand-held shower
- ▶ Use moderate temperature water instead of hot
- ▶ Use a long-handled sponge
- ▶ Wear low-heeled shoes with shock absorbers
- ▶ Use an elevated toilet seat



**Questions to ask before beginning a task:**

- Should I do this job?
- Why is this job needed?
- When is the best time to do the job?
- How can the task be made easier?
  - How should equipment be changed to make tasks easier?
  - How can I use fewer and more effective motions?
- Am I comfortable while on the job?

<b>List Task</b>	<b>Changes to Make</b>

- **Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: [health-info@osu.edu](mailto:health-info@osu.edu).**