

Energy Conservation Techniques

Are you controlling your activities or are they controlling you?

I. Plan

1. **Analyze your work routine:** List your daily or weekly activities on paper; consider chores you do monthly, quarterly or weekly.
 - * Do you feel rushed or pressured to get tasks done?
 - * Do you feel stressed because your goal wasn't met by the end of the day or week?
2. **Eliminate unnecessary tasks:** or those that can be performed by another family member, service or attendant.
3. **Pre-plan your activities:** Alternate light and heavy tasks. Consider the best time of day. Establish a balance of work, rest and leisure time. Break down the tasks operation – by collecting items, doing the job, cleaning up and putting items away.
4. **Evaluate the jobs you do:** It is not necessary to do a job the same way you have done it all your life. Can you break the task into steps? Can any of the steps be eliminated?

II. Pace

1. Always walk slowly and use controlled breathing.
2. Use slow, smooth, and flowing movements: Rushing will only increase your discomfort. Think about what you are going to do next.
3. Take frequent rests. This will prevent over-fatigue and leave you ready to go on with other activities. Frequent short rests are better than fewer, longer rests.
4. Pace your work to your capacity.
5. The amount of rest you need and amount of activity you can do will change from day to day.
6. Avoid activities which can't be stopped immediately if they become too stressful.

III. Perform

You already know planning and pacing – now the “how to’s” of saving energy. The key is **modification** – sometimes the hardest step is to identify and change long-standing habits.

Four major areas to think of when modifying:

1. **Environment:** Organize your workspace. Store items in an area of most frequent use. De-clutter; throw away things you don't use.
2. **Position:** Sit for as many activities as possible. Maintain good posture. Bend at the knees – not the waist. Keep things within your optimal reach when sitting to work.
3. **Technique:** Don't carry if you can push. Use both hands to carry. Slide, don't lift; push, don't pull. Eliminate unnecessary motions. Use your feet instead of bending your waist – to close drawers and cupboards.
4. **Equipment:** Use long-handled dust pan, long shoehorn. For transporting items from room to room – use a wheeled cart. It will save energy as well as the number of trips needed.

IV. Proper Breathing

1. Remember to use the pursed lip and diaphragmatic breathing patterns when energy is exerted.
 - Inhale:** When lifting your arms or during lightest part of the activity such as: reaching for clothes or hangers or putting a shirt over your head.
 - Exhale:** When breathing or during the heavier part of the task, such as: reaching towards low cupboards, putting on shoes and socks. Exhale with the strenuous part of the activity requiring motion **toward** the body. Remember to breathe out **twice** as long as you breathe in.
2. If you feel that you cannot complete an activity (i.e., tying your shoelaces), sit up, inhale and exhale again while completing the task.
3. Remember to use breathing control while resting.