

Conserving Your Energy During Household Tasks

Energy conservation is a way to modify the way you do your daily activities so it's easier for you to complete them. This information is very beneficial for people with limited endurance or those having breathing difficulties. Here are different ways to conserve energy in your home.

Bathing/grooming

- Pace activity and use pursed-lipped breathing as needed.
- If you have oxygen, wear while you shower.
- Turn water to cold first, then to warm, to decrease steam build-up.
- Open window and/or door; turn on fan to ventilate room.
- If you feel more short of breath, sit down while you sponge bathe or sit down on a shower chair in the shower.
- Sit on toilet to dry off or use a terry-cloth robe to absorb the water.
- Use electric toothbrush.
- Equipment options for bathing: tub bench, shower chair, transfer bench, grab bars, long-handled sponge, hand-held shower nozzle.

Dressing

- Pace activity and use pursed-lipped breathing as needed.
- Gather and organize clothes before you start dressing.
- Sit during dressing to save energy.
- Dress lower part of body first, as this takes more energy to complete.
- Instead of bending down to put on socks or shoes, rest foot on opposite knee to complete activity.
- Use footstool.
- Use Velcro buttons, Velcro shoes or slip-on shoes.
- Wear loose-fitting clothes.
- Equipment options: reacher, sock-aid, long-handled shoehorn, elastic shoelaces.

Meal preparation

- Pace activity and use pursed-lipped breathing as needed.
- Sit as much as possible while preparing and/or cooking your meal.
- Gather all of your dishes and ingredients at one time.
- Reorganize frequently-used items within arm's reach.
- Use microwave or frozen meals.
- Eliminate unused kitchen items to avoid clutter.
- Slide heavy pots/pans across countertops/tables to avoid lifting.
- Purchase non-stick cookware or use the disposable aluminum foil kind of bakeware for ease in cleaning.
- Cook and serve from the same dish.
- Equipment options: reacher, wheeled cart.

Housecleaning

- Pace activity and use pursed-lipped breathing as needed.
- Have duplicate cleaning supplies in bathroom and kitchen.
- Use cleaning products that do not need to be rinsed off or dried.
- Family members assist as needed.
- Make a weekly schedule so you are not doing all of the heavier cleaning in one day. Evaluate when is the best time for you to do an activity depending on your energy level.
- Avoid cleaning products with heavy fumes and/or powder.
- Allow dishes to air dry.
- Make one side of the bed and then the other.

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- Use long-handled mop to clean the tub.
- Tie a moist handkerchief over nose and mouth while cleaning to prevent breathing in fumes and dust.
- Equipment options: long-handled mop.

Laundry

- Pace activity and use pursed-lipped breathing as needed.
- Buy clothing made out of permanent press to decrease ironing.
- If washer and dryer are in the basement, place laundry in a bag and let it fall down the stairs.
- If washer and dryer are in the basement, stay downstairs between wash and dry cycles to avoid frequent stair climbing.
- Sit to iron.
- Spread out laundry throughout the week to eliminate larger loads in one day.
- Equipment options: reacher.

Bed making

- Place one hand on the headboard or mattress for support when changing linens.
- Place bedding on close piece of furniture to avoid bending down to floor for clean sheets when changing linens.

Grocery shopping

- Take advantage of store personnel to carry bags to car.
- To reach items on high shelves, stand close and place one hand on middle shelf for support or ask for assistance.
- Make sure bags are packed with a small number of items for ease in carrying. Use a wheeled cart if necessary.
- Carry only one bag at a time, making sure vision is not blocked.
- Use handrails when climbing up steps.

Gardening

- Use long-handled devices. Use raised flower beds to avoid bending over.

Miscellaneous

- Avoid throw rugs.
- Use chairs with arms for added ease for getting out of the chair.
- Use portable phone.
- If you have a walker, use a walker bag/basket to carry items.
- Perform tasks at appropriate work heights.
- Always face your work.
- Avoid over-reaching during tasks.
- Don't rush tasks.
- Delegate responsibility to others as needed.