

# Save Your Energy

## *Tips to make daily activities easier to do*

*This handout gives tips to help you save energy while doing your daily activities. Following these tips will help you participate in more activities within your physical limits.*

### Pace Yourself

- Take your time with your tasks. Avoid rushing or working under pressure.
- Plan your day so that you go back and forth between harder and easier tasks.
- Rest often, before you feel tired.
- Try to avoid situations that will cause you physical or emotional stress.

### Support Your Body

- Sit to do your work as much as possible. A firm surface with armrests is best. Avoid soft couches and chairs.
- Higher seats are easier to stand up from than lower seats.
- Use 2 hands whenever possible.
- Adjust work areas to be at waist height for most tasks.
- Bend your knees or squat if you need to pick up something. Do not bend your back.
- Keep your elbows below the height of your shoulders as much as possible. Keep your arms close to your body during activities.
- Avoid heavy lifting, pushing, and other arm movements that make your arms tired.
- Breathe evenly. Do not hold your breath during activities.
- Stand and sit up straight. Good posture helps save energy.
- Use adaptive equipment to make your daily tasks easier.
- Avoid climbing stairs as much as possible. Use elevators or escalators whenever you can.



*Try to lift things with 2 hands.*

### Organize Your Home

- Store items where you use them most often.
- Put items you use the most on the counter. A little clutter is better than having to reach.
- Store other items you use a lot above the height of your waist.
- Make sure items are easy to reach, so that you do not need to bend or stretch.
- Throw away things you no longer need.

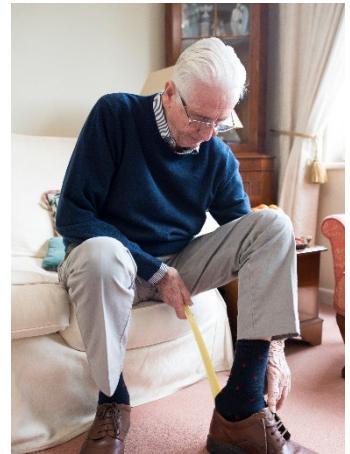


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of this handout.*

# Plan Your Self-Care

## Getting Dressed

- Dress your lower body first, and then your upper body.
- Put on your underwear and pants at the same time, so you only have to stand once to pull them up.
- Wear clothes that open in the front. Clothes with buttons, hooks, or zippers in the back are hard to put on and take off by yourself.
- Avoid wearing clothes that are hard to get on or off.
- If they give you enough support, wear slip-on shoes. Do not wear slip-on shoes if you need foot or leg braces.
- Raise your feet to tie your shoelaces. If your feet do not fit on the surface you are sitting on, use a footstool. Or wear shoes with elastic shoelaces or Velcro straps so that you do not have to tie and untie your shoes.
- Use a long-handled shoehorn to avoid bending when you put on your shoes.



**Long-handled shoehorn**

## Personal Hygiene Tasks

- Sit for longer tasks, such as hair care, putting on makeup, or shaving.
- Support your elbows if the activity takes longer than 5 minutes.
- Try to limit the number of times you have to reach over your head. This will be easier on your heart and less tiring.
- Use a washcloth to rinse your face instead of leaning into the sink to splash water on your face.
- Do not use scented soaps, powders, or aerosol sprays. These products make it harder to breathe.
- Wash your hair in the shower instead of in the sink.
- Keep your hair in a style that is easy to care for. Choose a style that does not require you to have your hands above your head for very long.
- If your blood levels allow you to brush your teeth and gums, use an electric toothbrush. Ask your doctor if this is OK for you.

## Bathing or Showering

- Sit on a chair, stool, or bench in the shower.
- Install and use grab bars. Put nonskid strips or a rubber mat on the shower or tub floor for safety.
- Use a long-handled brush or sponge. This will decrease how much you must bend and stretch.
- Use warm water for your shower. Very hot or cold water causes more stress on your body.
- Sit down to dry yourself.
- Put on a terry cloth robe to help absorb water in places that are hard to reach.
- Try using a hand-held showerhead.
- Rest before, during, and after taking your shower.

## Meals

- Plan your meals ahead of time.
- Use recipes that are easy and quick to make.
- Eat light meals. Eating big meals can make you more tired.
- Prepare extra portions and freeze them for when you are too tired to cook.
- Sit as much as possible when you are preparing food and when you are cleaning up after eating.
- Use a wheeled cart to carry plates, utensils, and food from the kitchen to the table. Use the cart again for carrying used dishes to the dishwasher.
- Slide heavy objects along the counter instead of lifting them.
- Use a microwave oven for easy cooking and reheating.
- Use tools and appliances to make cooking and cleaning up as easy as possible.
- Use a dishwasher. Let dishes you wash by hand air dry instead of drying them yourself.
- Keep a list of items you need to buy. This will help you make fewer trips to the store.
- Organize your grocery list based on where the items are in the store. This will help shopping go more smoothly and quickly. Or, have your groceries delivered.

## Make Household Tasks Easier

### Cleaning and Dusting

- Keep cleaning tools in the area where you will use them.
- Keep small items in a small basket with a handle for easy carrying.
- Use a cart to store or move heavy items.
- Make sure mops and brooms have long handles, so that you have to bend less.
- Ask your doctor if it is OK for you to use a vacuum cleaner. It may be too stressful. If you can use a vacuum, be sure to use attachments to make the job easier.
- Use a dustpan with a long handle.
- Use reachers.
- Break down your cleaning tasks into steps. Do these steps over several days rather than trying to do them all in the same day.



**Long-handled dustpan**

### Laundry and Ironing

- Remove permanent-press clothes from the dryer when they are still a little damp. They will need little or no ironing.
- Use a cart when moving clothes to be folded or hung on a clothesline.
- Sit to sort and fold clothes.
- Sit to iron.

### Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.