

How to conserve your energy



Information for patients

Sheffield Respiratory and Cardiac Mental Health Team



What is energy conservation?

Energy conservation is about maximising your energy so that you can get the most out of your day.

This involves thinking about how you do tasks and considering what the best way is for you to carry them out.

Techniques to do this may seem simple, but it can mean changing habits of a lifetime. It involves concentrating on tasks that have been automatic in the past.

Questions to ask yourself when looking at a task

1. Is this job really necessary?
 - Can some or all of the activity be eliminated?
2. Am I the right person to do it?
 - Can someone help you?
 - If people are willing to help do let them.
 - Don't soldier on, pushing yourself beyond your limits.
3. Is this the best way to do it?
 - Can you do things in a different order, or sitting, or slower or in parts?
 - Can you incorporate lighter tasks or rest periods into your activities?
4. Is this the best time to do it?
 - Perhaps do tasks at a different time of day.

Pacing

- Pacing is a method of planning your daily activities, to balance your rest and activity needs.
- Use your energy more efficiently by alternating active jobs with lighter activities.
- Incorporate rest time into a busy day.
- Use relaxation techniques to help decrease tension and allow you to feel more able to cope with commitments.
- Do tasks slower to conserve energy. Look at your speed.
- Practice not overdoing things on your good days.

Planning

- Take note of the times in your day when you know you have the most or least amount of energy, such as after an afternoon rest, and work your activities around these times.
- Think about whether you can combine tasks. For instance, if you need to go upstairs and fetch something think about whether there is anything else you may need during the day.
- Divide activities up into manageable sized chunks.
- Lists can help you decide what to do and when. A list of daily tasks can help you spread jobs out over the day to avoid over exertion or rushing. You can also make lists of weekly and monthly tasks such as cleaning. By working in this way you are more likely to have energy at the end of the day to spend with your family or to focus on those things you want to do.

Organisation

- Have things that you often use within easy reach to minimise exertion. For example, have tea and coffee on the work surface near the kettle.
- Ask yourself is there an easier way to do something?

Equipment

- There are devices and equipment that can help you avoid lifting, bending, reaching, carrying and standing for prolonged periods.
- Some people find wheeled trolleys useful to carry objects around the house.

Household tips

Kitchen

- Use lightweight pots and pans.
- Use electrical appliances where possible.
- Use equipment to assist you. For example a kettle tipper, vegetable basket, spill-not jar opener or kitchen trolley.
- Use a perching stool when preparing food to take the weight off your feet.
- Rearrange plates and utensils to make sure they are easily accessible.
- Slide pots rather than lift, especially if they are heavy.

Cleaning

- Break tasks into manageable chunks e.g. vacuum one room per day, rather than the whole house in one go.
- Have duplicate sets of cleaning equipment where they are frequently used. For instance a set upstairs and downstairs.
- Use long-handled equipment such as a dustpan and brush.
- Intersperse heavy tasks when your energy levels are at a peak.

Laundry

- Keep dirty clothes in a wall hanging bag for ease of access.
- Do not carry a full basket of clothes. Use a washing basket trolley if possible.
- Use a height adjustable clothes line or rotary washing line to avoid stretching and lifting. A clothes airer may be easier for smaller pieces of clothing.
- Sort out laundry on a table or stool to avoid bending.

Ironing

- Lower the ironing board so that you can sit or use a perching stool.
- Most items don't need ironing. Consider what is really essential.

Making beds

- Duvets and fitted sheets may be easier to manage than blankets and sheets.
- Keep beds away from the wall so you don't need to move them.

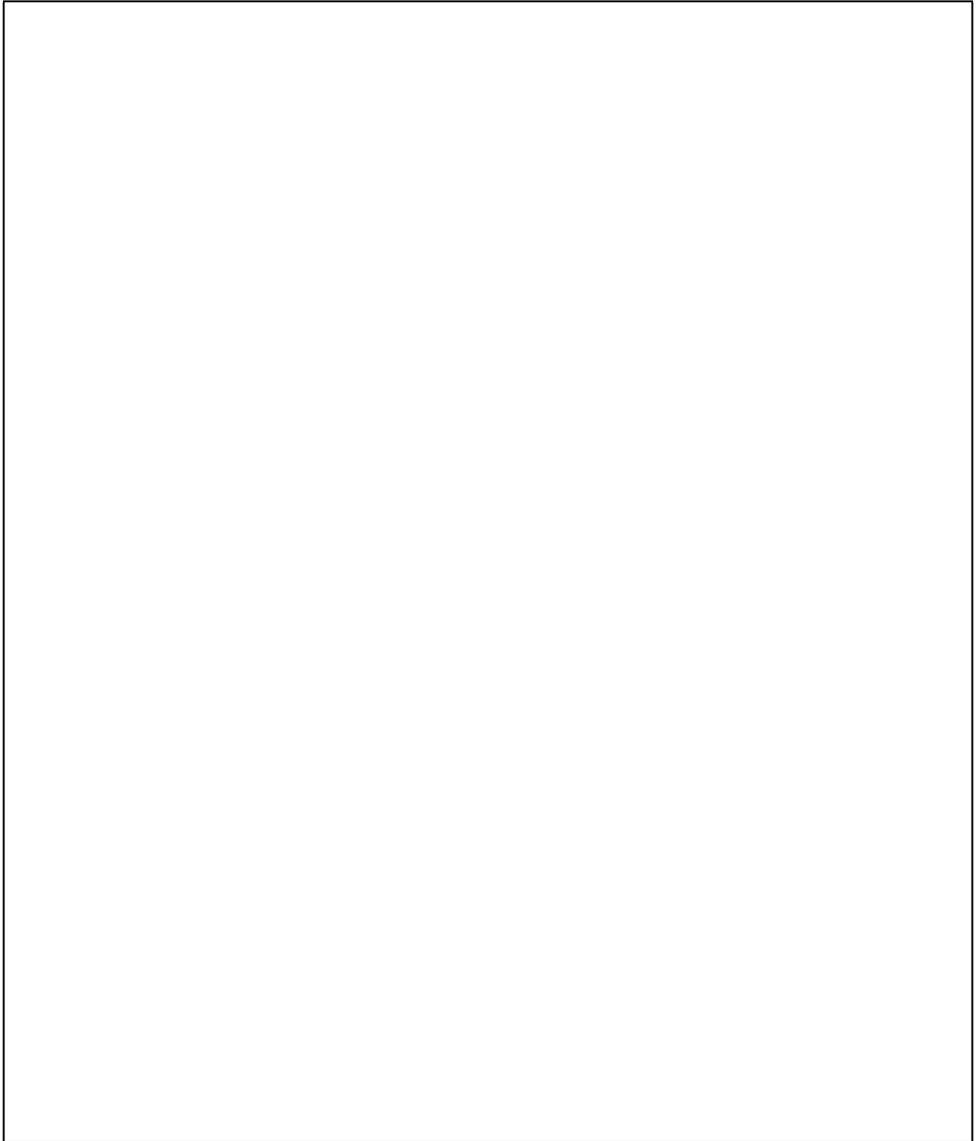
Washing and dressing

- Sit down when washing and dressing.
- Use a towelling dressing gown to help you get dry.

If you have any questions concerning anything mentioned in this information leaflet please do not hesitate to contact your health professional.

My pacing plan

Try taking a few minutes to write your pacing plan

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their pacing plan. The box occupies most of the page's vertical space.

Contact information



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