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## Energy Conservation

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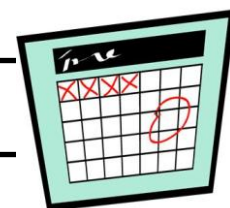
### What is Energy Conservation?

- After being in the hospital, it is normal to feel tired and weak. You may also feel short of breath and have less energy to do the activities you are used to doing at home. Learning how to conserve your energy helps you build up your strength to take part in your daily activities and other things you enjoy doing.
- When you learn to conserve energy, you also reduce strain on your heart, fatigue, shortness of breath and stress related pain.
- Learning to conserve your energy is all about finding a good balance between work, rest and leisure in order to decrease the amount of energy demand on your body.

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### Remember and Practice the 4 Ps

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#### 1. Prioritize

- Decide what needs to be done today and what can be done at a later date or time. For example, going to a doctor's appointment would take priority over dusting the living room.
- When you have more than one thing to do, begin with the most important to make sure it gets done.

#### 2. Plan

- Plan your activities first to avoid extra trips. Gather the supplies and equipment you need before doing the job. For example, get your garden supplies and tools ready before you start to plant flowers.
- Plan to alternate heavy and light tasks.
- Plan activities throughout the week to avoid doing too many activities in one day. Put a schedule on the refrigerator to remind you and others who is doing what.
- Plan to get a good rest each night.
- Use family and friends or pay for help to complete tasks you may struggle with or that require too much energy.



#### 3. Pace

- Maintain a slow and steady pace. Never rush.

### 3. Pace (continued)

- Rest often. **Rest before you feel tired.**
- Avoid holding your breath. Practice breathing slow and steady.
- Use pursed lip breathing. Breathe in through your nose for a count of 2 and out from your mouth for a count of 4. This is like blowing out a candle on a cake.
- Remember that you may have to ask for help to do some tasks and that is okay.
- Listen to your body and know your limits.

### 4. Position

- Too much bending and reaching can cause fatigue and shortness of breath. Use a reacher, sock aid, long handled shoe horn and/or elastic shoelaces. Avoid bending and reaching too much.
- Always maintain a nice upright posture when sitting and standing. This helps you get more oxygen into your lungs and around your body to work better.
- Sit when you can. Sitting supports your body so you can focus on your breathing and activities while conserving your energy. Sitting reduces energy use by 25%.



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## Energy Conservation Tips

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### Dressing and Hygiene

- Sit when you can.
- Organize and lay out clothing the night before.
- Begin dressing your lower half first as this uses more energy.
- Avoid bending and reaching. Instead, use a reacher, sock aid or long handled shoe horn or lift your legs up onto the bed or chair.
- Dry off with terry cloth robe. You use less energy than drying off with a towel.
- If you have a weaker limb or limbs, it is easier to dress the weaker limb first. It is easier to undress your strong limb first.
- Wear clothes that are easy to put on and take off. For example, use clothes and shoes with velcro® instead of small buttons, clasps or laces.



- Avoid using scented products such as hair products and lotions. These can irritate your lungs and cause shortness of breath for you and others around you. Many people are allergic to scents. These types of products are not allowed in the hospital.
- Be cautious when bathing. Use warm, not hot water. This helps eliminate shortness of breath from a buildup of steam and condensation.
- Use the bathroom equipment suggested by your Occupational Therapist. For example using a bath bench, bath stool, grab bars or a raised toilet seat can make bathing and toileting easier and safer.

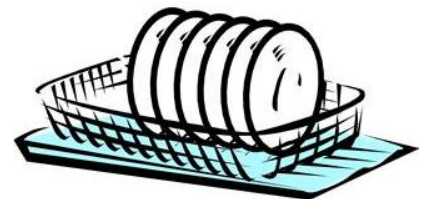
## Shopping

- Bring a prepared list of things you need to buy.
- Organize your shopping list by aisle or section of the store.
- Transport items in a buggy or shopping cart rather than carrying them in a basket.
- Load and carry grocery bags that are only half full or shop with someone who can help pack and carry bags.
- Avoid going out during rush hour when stores and streets are crowded.
- Consider using a delivery service.



## Housework

- Divide activities and do them throughout the week. Balance light with heavy tasks.
- Make one side of the bed at a time. Sit to change pillow cases and unfold linen.
- Avoid spray cleaners that may irritate your lungs.
- Clean the bathtub by sitting or kneeling.
- Clean one whole room at a time instead of going back and forth between rooms to do each job.
- Consider asking for help from family members or hiring a cleaning service or housekeeper.
- After washing dishes, allow them to air dry.
- Have work in front of you rather than at your side.
- Slide rather than lift objects.
- Use long handled dustpans and cleaning sponges to decrease the need for bending.



- Make a weekly plan for major jobs such as laundry, cleaning and changing sheets on beds. Do one job each day.
- Keep a trash can in every room to avoid too much walking.
- Buy more than one of each item you use around the house. For example, keep sink cleaner in the bathroom and kitchen. Keep a vacuum on each level of your home.



## Cooking

- Cook and bake in steps to reduce energy use.
- Gather all ingredients and utensils before starting.
- Plan ahead with meal preparation.
- Make large meals and freeze in servings for later use.
- Use lightweight cookware and dishes to conserve energy.
- Use paper plates and cups to eliminate dishwashing.
- Use electric appliances such as can openers, blenders, food processors and dishwasher to conserve energy.
- Consider buying easy to prepare or frozen meals, or using a meal delivery service.



## Key Points:

- **Prioritize** activities of the day. Do heavier tasks when you have more energy.
- **Plan** your days' and weeks' activities. Set up your work area so you do not have to move around a lot looking for items to complete the task. Plan rest times.
- **Pace** yourself. Do not try to complete the whole task in one session. Break it into smaller, easy to do steps. A good guide to follow is to take 10 minutes each hour to rest. **Do not rush.**
- **Position and Posture** are important. Sit to work when you can to use 25% less energy. Sit and stand as upright as you can. Practice deep breathing exercises while you work to maintain your breathing rate and stay relaxed.
- **Use assistive devices** when recommended to save energy and make it more comfortable and easy taking care of yourself.



## Remember...

- **The most important energy conservation tip is to listen to your body.**
- **Stop and rest BEFORE you get tired. Plan rest times. Rest often.**