

## Conserving your energy during activity

### What is energy conservation?

Energy conservation is a way of reducing the effort you put into carrying out every day activities in order to minimise fatigue.

### How will energy conservation help me?

Conserving energy will minimise how tired you feel and may assist you whilst maintaining activities.

An Occupational Therapist has recommended that you conserve energy in normal day-to-day activities in order to minimise fatigue. Fatigue can limit your ability to plan and carry out your activities effectively.

### How can I conserve energy?

#### General Points

- Plan ahead.
- Prioritise activities.
- Balance activities between those that require high levels of effort and those requiring less.
- Take frequent rests during activities.
- Organise the area e.g. bathroom, kitchen so the items frequently used are readily available and require minimum effort to access them.
- Consider how you carry out the activity e.g. could you sit?
- Use assistive devices to reduce the energy or force required to complete an activity e.g. using a jar opener.
- Delegate activities that are less important for you to do to a friend, family or carer.

### Below are examples of every day activities with advice and tips which you may find helpful

#### Washing and dressing

- Plan the activity and have all the washing items nearby.
  - Use a chair/stool in the bathroom if space allows. If you need to sit and there is limited space, could you use a bowl on a table in another room?
  - Take frequent rests while washing and dressing.
  - Ensure that the bathroom is warm so you can rest without getting cold.
  - If you find washing and dressing exhausts you, consider assistance with all or part of the activity as this could enable you to cope with the rest of your day.
  - Use a towelling bathrobe to dry yourself.
  - Select all your clothing before starting to dress.
  - Sit to dress - can dressing be carried out in the bedroom rather than the bathroom?
  - Wear clothing that is easy to put on; choose loose fitting items and elastic waist bands.
- N.B. Equipment is available to purchase to assist with washing and dressing, e.g:
- A long handled shoe horn to help you to put your shoes on.
  - A long handled sponge to help you to wash your feet and your back.

- A Helping Hand aid to help you to reach for items and dressing the lower half of your body.

Please ask your Occupational Therapist for further information and details of suppliers, or contact **Possibility People** – 01273 894040 or Email: [hello@possabilitypeople.org.uk](mailto:hello@possabilitypeople.org.uk)

### Using the kitchen

- Consider the layout of your kitchen equipment and locate items that are used together e.g. tea, coffee, cups, kettle.
- Avoid unnecessary walking and carrying. Plan ahead and gather all items required before commencing the task.
- Use a chair /stool to enable you to take rests.
- Use light-weight kettles/ pans.
- Use a jug to fill the kettle. Stand the jug in the sink when filling. Boil only the amount of water you need at the time making the kettle lighter to hold when making hot drinks etc.
- Use ready meals, frozen foods and also pre-prepared foods (such as grated cheese and chopped vegetables) to reduce the amount of time and energy you spend preparing. Check diet restriction e.g. low salt, low fat on ready meals.
- Use a meal delivery service. Some local restaurants deliver and there are home delivery services providing frozen ready meals. (Ask your OT for details of local services).
- Can you eat/drink in the kitchen to reduce carrying items into the lounge/dining room? If not, could someone carry the items for you? Can you use a rucksack / or bag worn across the body to carry items in?
- Let washing up air-dry rather than standing to dry up.

### Housework

- Ask yourself whether the tasks can be done less frequently.
- Carry out a small number of tasks at a time rather than one long session.
- Consider assistance by employing someone to help you with heavier work such as vacuuming and changing bedding.
- Can you reduce the amount of ironing required by wearing clothing made of non-iron materials? Try not to iron items such as bedding.
- Use a stool/chair when ironing.

### Shopping

- Make a list.
- Consider purchasing items with a long shelf life to reduce the need to shop frequently.
- When shopping, use a shallow high trolley rather than carrying a basket.
- Enquire about mobility aids such as a mobility scooter provided by some shops and supermarkets for customer use. "Shop Mobility" schemes exist at many large shopping centres.
- Enquire if your local shop delivers.
- Use alternative means of shopping such as home delivery. Many larger supermarkets offer a home shopping service (access to the internet is required and a charge may be made).
- The milkman also offers a limited range of foods.
- Try catalogue and internet shopping for other items such as clothing and gifts.
- Delegate shopping to friends, family or carers.

### Remember

- Each day will be different
- You will have **your own** limitations.
- Sometimes having support or using equipment with an activity will enable you to choose what you use your energy for.

## Where can I get equipment advice?

**Possibility People** – Experienced Independent advisors offering help and advice on:

- Equipment
- What it is likely to cost you
- Where it can be purchased

Tel: 01273 894040, Available five days a week Monday – Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm.

## Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

## Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team – Tel: 0300 131 4500 Ext: 135860 or by email at: [esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net)

## Hand hygiene

The trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

## Other formats

**If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.**

**Tel: 0300 131 4500**

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your OT.

---

---

---

---

---

## Reference

Written by: Deborah Wilde – Occupational Therapy Technician

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:

Clare Archer – Lead Orthopaedic and Surgical Occupational Therapist

Rosy Shrubbs – Lead Integrated Discharge Team Occupational Therapist

Next review date: November 2022

Responsible clinician reviewer: Clare Archer