

Conserving Energy

Fatigue is a common symptom which can be triggered by illness. This can have a significant impact on your function, thoughts and behaviour. Tiredness makes you less motivated which means you avoid activity which in turn can increase your fatigue. The cycle can be difficult to break but it can be managed by understanding **why** and **when you have less energy**, learning how to **conserve energy** and by **keeping active**.

The 4 Stages of Conserving Energy

1. Planning

- Save energy by reorganising tasks.
- Find the balance between doing things and taking rest.
- Think about when your energy is at its highest, which activity can be done then.
- Which activities can be postponed, can be combined or adapted by doing it differently.
- Spread activities throughout the week.

2. Prioritising

- Use your reduced energy well.
- Think about your tasks in order of importance for you. If it isn't essential, don't do it, delegate.

3. Pacing

- Do a little at a time, if you are tired after 20 mins activity, stop after 10. Break the task down into small chunks.
- Balance physical and mental activities with breaks in between.
- Slow down as this will take less energy.

4. Permission

- Give yourself permission to recognise the things you are achieving, however small and importantly save some energy for fun.



Practical Ways for Conserving Energy

Activities of daily living

Personal care

- Install a grab rail for support
- Sit to shower/bath. A shower board may be helpful
- Use a shower mitt or sponge rather than wringing a facecloth
- Sit rather than stand
- Rest elbows on dressing table / sink
- Think about the height of the toilet, it's easier to stand from a raised height.
- Choose loose fitting clothes
- Organise yourself early so you don't have to rush
- Lay clothes out before starting, to avoid having to walk back and forth
- Use a long handled shoe horn/sock aid/tights aid, if needed.

Walking and climbing stairs

- Wear secure/non slip shoes
- Pace your breathing as you walk, breathe in for a count of 1 and slowly out for a count of 2. Avoid holding your breath.
- Use a wheelchair for longer trips e.g. shopping.
- Maintain good posture, avoiding too much bending and twisting.
- Place chairs at "rest points" in the house
- Use walking aids
- Use the support of the banister rail when using stairs
- Stop when you need to.

Shopping

- Enquire about shopping by phone, catalogue, on line
- Make a list
- Use a power scooter or wheelchair if the shop has one
- Request assistance with getting groceries into the car
- Shop with a friend
- Rest before going out
- Use the trolleys for support



Meal Preparation

- Have snacks to boost energy
- Plan menus for a week
- Use frozen mixes and pre-packaged foods
- Use electric appliances e.g. can opener, knife, blender, microwave
- Transport items on a trolley.
- Cook twice as much and freeze half
- Use a nonslip mat or damp towel under bowls to prevent them slipping
- Use a perforated ladle to lift vegetables out of the saucepan, leave the water until cool
- Leave dishes to drip dry
- If possible set the table for the next meal after washing and drying dishes to save putting dishes away and then taking out later.
- Store all items used frequently at waist height to avoid bending

Laundry

- Sort out laundry on the table instead of the floor to eliminate stooping/twisting
- Sit to transfer clothes into the washing machine/dryer
- Put a basket on a chair to avoid bending when hanging clothes on the line
- Sit to iron don't iron unnecessarily e.g. tea towels, underwear and only if you enjoy it.

Child Care

- Plan activities around the table, not the floor
- Teach small children to climb onto your lap instead of being lifted
- Teach children to make a game of some household chores
- Get them to stand on a chair/bed if you're helping them to dress to avoid bending/stooping

Cleaning

- Use a basket or trolley to carry your cleaning supplies
- Keep duplicates of cleaning equipment in places where its used frequently e.g. bathroom, kitchen
- Delegate



Gardening

- Sit when you can, plant in raised bed or tubs
- Buy equipment to help you get up/down
- Use long handled spades, trowels etc.

General

- Spread tasks over the week and do a little bit each day
- Delegate heavy work
- Keep things you use frequently to hand

By changing the way you do some of your tasks you can save your precious energy to do the things you love.