

# Tips and Tricks for Energy Conservation

## **Tips:**

1. Sit for as many activities as possible.
2. Pace yourself and allow more time for each activity – no rushing.
3. Consider the best time of day for each activity.
4. Eliminate unnecessary tasks (e.g., air dry dishes versus hand drying).
5. Take frequent rest breaks. Take a break before you become too tired or over fatigued.
6. Balance rest and activity.
7. Pre-plan activities: use daily schedules, weekly schedules or both to spread out activities.
8. Store often-used items in easy-to-reach places.
9. Avoid lifting/carrying heavy objects.
10. During activity use both arms in smooth, flowing motions. Avoid jerky movements.
11. Pursed lip breathing: breath in through the nose and out through gently pursed lips (smell the roses and blow out the birthday candles).

## **Tricks to Avoid Rushing:**

1. Plan your schedule to allow more time to engage in activity and rest breaks.
2. Work at a slow, rhythmic, relaxed speed; complete tasks to music if necessary.
3. Pace yourself.
4. Spread heavy and light tasks throughout the day/week, doing heavy tasks when you have the most energy.
5. Set priorities.
6. Eliminate unnecessary tasks.
7. Delegate jobs when possible.
8. Plan frequent periods for rest and relaxation (both mentally and physically).

## Activities of Daily Living

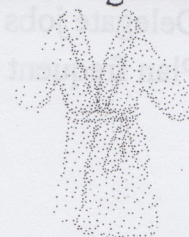
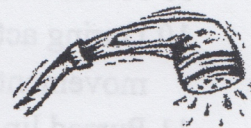
### Grooming/Hygiene:

- Sit when possible.
- Have one designated area where all supplies are organized: razor, toothbrush, make up, etc.
- Consider a short, easier-to-care-for haircut.
- Wash hair while in the shower.
- Have hair done by a professional, or ask family members to help out.
- Support elbows on counter or table top when tasks take 5 minutes or longer.
- Never force, bear down, or hold your breath when having a bowel movement. Take deep breaths in through your nose and push gently as your blow out through pursed lips.



### Bathing/Showering:

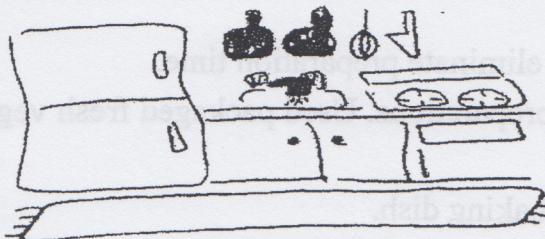
- Sit on a shower or tub chair/stool when showering or bathing.
- Sit to dress, undress, bathe, and dry.
- Use a long-handled bath sponge or hand towel to wash back and feet.
- Use lukewarm water to reduce steam if you have difficulty with shortness of breath, or decrease the amount of steam by turning on the cold water first and then adding hot water slowly.
- Use a shower hose extension (hand-held shower) to increase control over direction of spray.
- Install grab bars and nonslip strips to prevent falls.
- Organize shampoo, conditioner, and soap in an easy-to-reach place in the shower/bath tub.
- Have a towel and robe easily accessible. Use a towel or terry-cloth robe to pat yourself dry (or wear a terry-cloth robe until dry) instead of vigorously drying off with a towel.
- If oxygen is prescribed it should be worn while bathing.
- Avoid overexertion by taking rest breaks.



Adapted from: Berry, N. (2011). Appendix D: Energy Conservation and Work Simplification Strategies. In Smith-Gabai, H. (Ed.) Occupational Therapy in Acute Care. Bethesda, MD: The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.

## Dressing:

- Designate a dressing area where all clothes can be reached easily.
- Before starting, gather all clothes and shoes together.
- Sit to dress.
- Remember breathing techniques – exhale while bending over or raising arms up.
- Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, comfortable clothing. Use suspenders if belts are too restricting.
- Complete lower-body dressing before upper-body dressing.
  - Eliminate bending as much as possible to minimize shortness of breath. Consider using adaptive equipment to minimize bending.
  - Bring feet toward the body rather than bending down.
  - Minimize bending by crossing one leg over the other while sitting to put on socks, underwear, pants or shoes.
  - Pull underwear and pants to knees while sitting, then stand one time to pull both items of clothing over hips.
  - Put on slip-on shoes with a long handled shoe horn.
- Try to use clothing that opens in the front, preferably with zippers, hook-and-loop fasteners, or buttons. Shirts that open from the front do not require neck flexion, which can constrict the lungs, making breathing slightly more labored. Similarly, use a front closing bra.



## In the Kitchen:

- Use a cart with wheels to move items from the refrigerator to the sink or counter.
- Use the counter space for sliding heavy objects rather than carrying them.
- Keep frequently used items and ingredients within easy reach; store items where they will be used. For example, keep canned goods near the electric can opener, and keep pots and pans near the stove.

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- Keep heavier items where they can be slid back and forth rather than lifting and carrying. Store lighter items higher up.
- Use electric appliances to make the work easier and quicker. For example, use a blender, electric can opener, electric knife, or microwave.
- Stabilize or set objects down on the counter or table rather than holding them.
- Use lightweight utensils and cookware.
- Distribute the weight of heavy pots or trays over two hands rather than one. Use oven mitts for handling hot items.
- Angle a mirror over the stove to see into the pots from a seated position.
- Use dishes that can go from preparation to oven to dinner table.
- Eat on paper plates or reuse dishes directly from the dishwasher.
- Inquire whether the grocery store delivers or whether Meals on Wheels is available in your area.

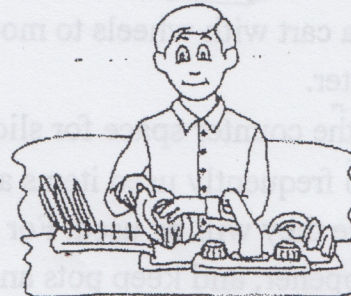
### Cooking:

- Cook large quantities, and freeze individually wrapped portions for later.
- Prepare part of the meal ahead of time.
- Use recipes that require short preparation time and little effort.
- Gather all necessary items before beginning meal preparation.
- Sit to prepare items and mix ingredients.
- Make one-pot meals.
- Use ready-made foods to eliminate preparation time.
- Avoid peeling and other preparations. Use packaged fresh vegetables or frozen products.
- Serve food directly from baking dish.



### After Meal Cleanup:

- Rest after meals before starting to clean up.
- Have everyone clear their own place setting.
- Use a utility cart to transport items.
- Let dishes soak to eliminate scrubbing.



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- Sit to wash dishes or use a dishwasher.
- Let dishes air dry.
- Use lightweight cloths or sponges rather than heavy terry cloth rags.

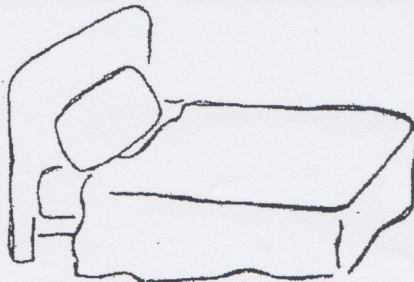
### House Cleaning:

- Clean a different room each day.
- Use a lightweight vacuum or power broom.
- Use long-handled dusters and cleaning attachments.
- Sit to dust.
- Use a mop or a dustpan with an extended handle to clean up spills on the floor.
- Use a dust mitt rather than gripping a dust rag.
- Break up chores over the whole week, doing a little each day.
- Keep cleaning supplies in the room in which you use them.
- Allow cleaning agents (foamy spray) time to do their work so that less scrubbing is required.



### Bed Making:

- Store bed linens near the bedroom.
- Use fitted sheets.
- Make as much of the bed as possible while still lying in it, or sit on the edge of the bed and soot up as the covers are straightened.
- Use the clock method. Start at one end of the bed and slowly make the bed as you move around to the other side.
- Use lightweight spread or comforter.
- Consider changing the sheets less often to conserve energy.
- Share the task with another person to reduce reaching.

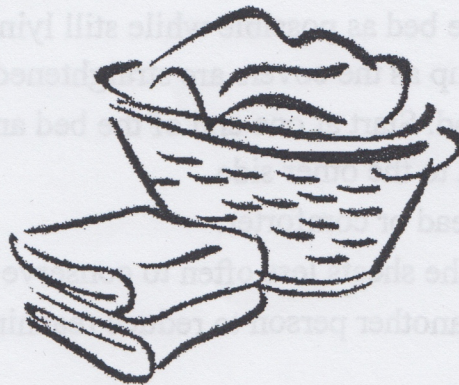


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## Laundry:

- If laundry area is downstairs or at the opposite end of the home, put soiled clothes in a large laundry bag and throw it down stairs or drag to washer.
- Use a scoop for a dry detergent rather than lifting the whole box. Put liquid in a pump container.
- Use a wheeled cart to move clothes.
- Make more frequent trips with lighter baskets of laundry rather than carrying heavy but less frequent loads.
- Sit to iron, sort clothes, pretreat stains, or fold laundry.
- Transfer wet clothes into the dryer a few items at a time.
- Use a long-handled reacher to remove clothes from the back of the washing machine.
- Remove clothes from the dryer immediately after cycle to avoid wrinkles.
- Get help to fold large items such as sheets.
- Buy clothes that are easy to wash and require little to no ironing.
- If you need to iron, try a travel iron, which weighs less than 2 pounds. When ironing, slide the iron rather than lifting it.
- Do not do all the laundry chores in 1 day. Spread the tasks out over several days.



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