

Occupational Therapy

Energy Conservation Booklet

Patient Information Leaflet



Options available

If you'd like a large print, audio, Braille or a translated version of this leaflet then please call:

01253 955588

Our Four Values:

People Centred

Positive

Compassion

Excellence

Energy Conservation

Energy conservation is a means of adapting the way you carry out your day-to-day activities, at work, rest and play. It also allows you to assess and adapt the environment in which you conduct these activities.

Everything we do from waking up to going to bed is classed as an activity and uses some form of energy. Before you begin to make changes to your daily routine the first step is to find out how you spend your time and energy.

This is very important as it will allow you to get a better understanding of how much you are doing and which activities are more or less demanding.

The aim of energy conservation is to improve your quality of life, by conserving your energy for the activities you “like to do” as well as those you “have to do”, within a safe and well structured environment.

(Taken from Breathe Easy - 2008)

The Six P's for more Energy

- Prioritise
- Plan
- Positioning
- Pace Yourself
- Positive Attitude
- Pursed lip Breathing

Remember that using SIX P'S could help to conserve you enough energy to do the things you enjoy while still allowing you to BREATHE EASY

(Reference – Breathe Easy 2008)

Prioritise / Plan

- Prioritise your daily routine and activities
- Plan daily activity schedule by alternating with heavy and light tasks
- Set realistic goals
- Break the task down into stages
- Eliminate unnecessary steps of a task
e.g minimise frequency of going up and downstairs during the day
- Pace yourself

General Advice

- Gather together necessary items before starting a task.
- Position frequently used items in a place that prevents bending or reaching.
- Use appropriate tools to simplify activities e.g. use long handled reachers to minimize the need to stoop/bend when retrieving objects.
- Use modern household utensils or electric appliances to save energy e.g. non-stick kitchen wares, electric can opener, microwave oven etc.
- Use wheeled trolleys to assist pushing and carrying heavy objects.

Positioning

- Sit down for your activities whenever possible. Keep a stool handy to allow you to sit down to perform tasks.
- Avoid tasks that require prolonged standing, squatting or stooping.
- Avoid raising your arms too high above shoulder level or bending over for too long.
- Keep your body straight while performing a task as poor posture consumes more energy.
- Avoid tiring and awkward posture that may impair breathing e.g. overhead reaching or bending over.
- Keep your arms straight and close to your body while carrying objects and spread the load between both arms at the same time.
- Support your elbows or forearms on a firm surface while you work e.g. shaving, peeling vegetables.

Pace Yourself

- Allow ample time to finish an activity
- Pace yourself, keep a slow and steady pace and don't rush
- Listen to your body messages and rest before you become exhausted
- Have sufficient rest after completing a task and before moving onto the next one

Positive Attitude

Rather than focusing on what you can't do, try to concentrate on what you can do to maintain a high quality of life. Be creative in finding ways to adapt your activities so that you can continue to perform them

Pursed Lip Breathing

- This technique may not be suitable for everyone such as patients who have breathing conditions.
- It is a breathing technique that allows for better emptying of stale air from the lungs, more oxygen into your blood, and is also relaxing. It is performed by inhaling through the nose, then exhaling slowly through pursed lips (as if whistling). Exhaling should take about twice as long as inhaling (i.e. count 1, 2 while inhaling and 1, 2, 3, 4 for exhaling). Relax while performing and don't force a deeper than normal inhalation or exhalation.

When performing an activity that makes you short of breath, use pursed lip breathing. Try performing the work while exhaling, e.g. when climbing one or two stairs. Repeat this, pacing yourself up the stairs.

Personal Hygiene

- Sit down to undress, wash and dry
- Use a long handled sponge to wash your back and feet
- Make sure the bathroom is well ventilated – leave the bathroom door and window open.
- Avoid the task of drying by using a towelling dressing gown.
- Avoid aerosols – use roll-ons or cream deodorant instead.
- Make use of electrical gadgets – toothbrushes and shavers.
- Following assessment by an Occupational Therapist you may be able to use a seat in the shower or a board across the bath to sit on whilst washing.

Dressing

- Sit down to dress/undress.
- Before starting gather all clothes together or have a dressing area.
- Depending on your routine; dress lower half first so clothing on your upper half doesn't restrict movement.
- Minimise bending by using long handled equipment or a foot stool.
- Consider the type of clothing – you may find slip on shoes and front fastening clothes easier to manage.
- Try to invest in a warm lightweight coat for winter.
- Wear a warm scarf in winter to cover your mouth if weather becomes cold or windy.

Cooking

- Sit down to prepare vegetables, wash dishes and mix ingredients.
- Cook large quantities that can be spooned into individual portions and frozen for use at a later date.
- Use ready meals to reduce meal preparation.
- Use a cooking basket to cook vegetables rather than lifting a heavy pan.
- Use a plastic jug to fill the kettle rather than lifting the kettle to the taps.
- Consider using a light weight/travel kettle.
- Position items in easier to reach places and closer together to reduce bending and reaching. i.e. tea, coffee and sugar with the kettle near the fridge.
- Use a trolley to transport items to avoid unnecessary trips to/from kitchen.

Housework

- Spread the cleaning out over a week – by doing a different room every day.
- Empty rubbish bins frequently, if possible, to avoid having to carry heavy bin bags.
- Consider positioning the dustbin by the front or back door for ease of putting rubbish into the bin (request assisted bin collections via the Council if needed).
- Let dishes soak to eliminate scrubbing.
- Let dishes drip dry.
- Ask family / friends to undertake heavier jobs e.g. vacuuming, cleaning windows.
- Consider having two sets of cleaning appliances/products, one for upstairs and one for downstairs to avoid having to carry them.
- When changing bed linen consider:
 - light weight bedding and pillows.
 - duvet cover inside out and turn back on itself.
 - use clothes pegs to attach duvet and cover together whilst changing the same.

Laundry

- Use a long handled reacher to put items in/out of the washer and dryer.
- Sit down to iron.
- Use fabric conditioner to reduce creasing.
- Eliminate items that don't need ironing
e.g. socks, underwear.
- Avoid hanging out washing at times of extreme temperature or weather.
- Consider using a clothes maiden.
- For smaller items consider using a 'circular peg holder' to reduce the number of times you are reaching up to the washing line.
- Use a trolley, if you can, to transport your washing to the washing machine / washing line.

Shopping

- Consider making a shopping list and spread the shopping out throughout the week.
- Use a high shelf trolley to avoid bending.
- Pack perishable and non perishable foods separately so that you can leave non-perishable goods in the boot of the car when unpacking. Collect them after a rest.
- Get to know the quieter times at your local shops and consider shopping at these times.
- Ask family / friends to assist with a once monthly bulk shop.
- Aim to complete lighter shopping yourself and get bulky shopping delivered from local supermarkets.
- Consider internet shopping

Gardening

- Break down task into stages, imagine your garden in sections.
- Consider low maintenance options e.g. window boxes, gravel, raised beds.
- Position hanging baskets at easier to reach levels to avoid having to reach over head height to water them.
- Consider using slow release water globes in plant pots/baskets to reduce frequency of watering them.
- Sit for tasks where possible or consider using a folding/kneeling stool.
- Reduce heavy lifting e.g. decant compost into smaller bags.
- Place plant pots onto wheeled stands to make them easier to reposition.
- Using electrical gardening tools require less effort than manual ones e.g. electric mower, hedge trimmer.
- Consider using lightweight and long handled gardening tools.
- Consider employing a gardener. Care and Repair may be able to recommend a reputable one. Blackpool Residents Tel 651122/ Wyre and Fylde Residents Tel 887569



Useful contact details

Hospital Switchboard: **01253 300000**

Patient Relations Department

The Patient Relations Department offer impartial advice and deal with any concerns or complaints the Trust receives. You can contact them via:

Tel: **01253 955589**

email: **patient.relations@bfwh.nhs.uk**

You can also write to us at:

**Patient Relations Department, Blackpool Victoria Hospital,
Whinney Heys Road, Blackpool FY3 8NR**

Further information is available on our website: **www.bfwh.nhs.uk**

References

This leaflet is evidence based wherever the appropriate evidence is available, and represents an accumulation of expert opinion and professional interpretation.

Details of the references used in writing this leaflet are available on request from:
Procedural Document and Leaflet Coordinator 01253 953397

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