

## Patient information

# Energy conservation

Energy conservation involves learning techniques to ensure you maintain a level of activity, help reduce fatigue and to improve activity tolerance.

It is about decreasing the amount of energy needed to perform activities. To do this you may need to rethink the way in which you do things in order to improve efficiency and reduce tiredness.

It is also about learning to pace yourself, incorporating rest and relaxation periods between activities. Remember that rest is not giving in but it is a way of recharging your body's energy.

## Energy conservation techniques

### Plan your time

- Plan your time: prioritise tasks and use timetables to plan activities into the day – alternate heavy and light tasks and plan in rest breaks.
- Pace yourself and take regular breaks: 5 - 10 minute breaks for every 20 minutes of activity is recommended. It is important to always plan rest into your day to adopt a good balance between effort and rest.
- Save energy by planning each activity and collect all items before starting the task i.e. collect all clothes before dressing or items for a meal before cooking – always rest if needed before commencing task.
- Break jobs down into smaller parts i.e. prepare vegetables the night before. You may be able to rest between stages of a job or spread it out over a few days.

- Accepting help is not giving in – accepting help with some jobs leaves energy to do things that are important to you. Also consider if a job needs to be done at all or if it could be eliminated ‘do I really need to do this now? Later? Or not at all?’

### Using equipment or services:

- When possible use delivery services to bring items to you, using the telephone or internet. If you prefer to go to the shop try to spread out your shopping little and often and ask for help with packing and if possible carrying to the car / taxi.
- Use labour saving equipment wherever possible, the following are some examples of equipment you could use:
  - Kitchen: food processor, electric can opener, strainer for use in pans to avoid lifting heavy pan, kitchen trolley to carry items
  - Bathing: bath lift if possible, bath board if using shower over the bath
  - Raise chairs / beds and raised toilet seats as higher furniture takes less effort to stand from
  - Dressing aids i.e. “helping hand” to avoid bending down to feet and enable you to reach parts of the body more easily



- This equipment can be found in disability retailers and advice can be sought from the Disability Resource Centre (Bury St Edmunds), social services or the ward occupational therapist. Once home, a referral to the occupational therapist can be made through your GP.

### Use correct body positioning

- Use correct body positions – a good posture minimises the use of energy, as less muscle energy is needed to maintain it. Get closer to a job where possible to eliminate reaching and use both hands when lifting and carrying to reduce energy needed. Try to split loads into smaller parts if possible when carrying.

- Use gravity and momentum to decrease the workload. Slide items rather than lifting them to decrease the effects of gravity. You could use a food trolley to carry items, which would also allow you to carry more items at a time reducing the number of trips needed.
- Perform activities seated rather than standing where possible. Examples could be to use a perch stool for washing, shaving etc, when preparing vegetables or when ironing.
- Store frequently used items together within easy reach to avoid reaching and unnecessary journeys i.e. keep tea making items by the kettle at a low level to avoid reaching into cupboards.

## **In summary**

- Plan your time and daily activities to minimise the energy needed to complete them.
- Plan rest breaks into your day – resting is not giving in but giving your body a chance to recover.
- Use correct body mechanics and equipment to reduce the amount of energy needed to complete a task.
- Ask for help where needed so that you have more energy for tasks you feel are a priority for you.
- How you use the techniques will be dependent on your individual needs and priorities. Find out what works best for you and try to incorporate these into your daily routine.

## **Useful contact numbers**

Age UK	Suffolk (9.00am-1.00pm)	01473 351234
	Norfolk	01603 787111
	Cambridge	0300 666 9860
	Essex	01245 346106
Social Services	Suffolk	0800 9171109
	Norfolk	0344 800 8020

Cambridge	03450 455202
Essex	0845 6037630
Disability Resource Centre	01284 748888
British Red Cross/Mobility Aids Loan Service	
Suffolk/Norfolk/Cambridgeshire	01284 767215
Essex	01992 586609
Suffolk Family Carers	01473 835477
Norfolk Family Carers	01603 219924
Essex Action for Family Carers	0300 7708090

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo) <https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>*



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