



island health

Geriatric Specialty Services

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Learn to conserve energy and minimize fatigue so you have more energy and time for rewarding and enjoyable activities.

Apply the 4 "P"s: Prioritize, Plan, Pace, Position

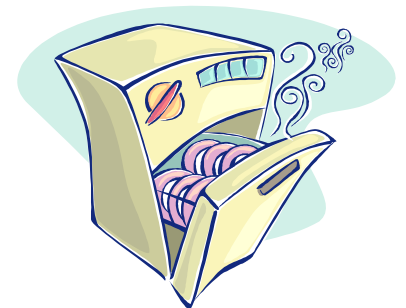
1. PRIORITIZING:

- What activities are most important or essential?
- What do you need or want to do yourself?
- What can someone else do for you? **HIRE RATHER THAN TIRE**
- What activities/tasks can be eliminated?
- What activities do you enjoy and want to do?
- Try to set yourself one goal or specific activity to do each day.
- Think about what is really important in life and focus on those things.
- Learn to say "no".



2. PLANNING:

- Plan your prioritized activities over the course of a week or a month
- **Spread out your activities** evenly. Alternate a day with a major activity with a quieter day before and after. Plan for a quieter day if you have an evening activity. Balance light and heavy activities.
- Do the most important tasks first.
- If possible, plan activities for times of day when you have most energy.
- When planning an activity that requires supplies or equipment, gather all the supplies and equipment together before you start.
- Be flexible. Leave lots of time. Allow time for frequent rests.
- Store things used together in one place, e.g., coffee filters, grounds & pot.
- Use time and energy saving equipment, e.g., dishwasher, electric can opener, etc.
- In summer, avoid outdoor activities in the heat of the day. Avoid getting chilled in winter.



3. PACING:

- **Don't rush** as this increases the energy required.
- **Break the activity down** into smaller parts and rest between each part. Reduce fatigue by breaking the task into parts and resting in between.
- **Maximize energy** with short, frequent periods of activity alternating with brief rests.
- Daily activity pattern should be **activity, rest, activity, rest, etc.** Try a pattern of 5 to 10 minutes of activity, followed by 10 minutes of rest, etc. A slow steady rate of activity with short rest periods will get the job done without doing you in. Work out what works best for you.
- Listen to your body. A short rest early will save time and energy.



4. POSITIONING:

- Find the most **comfortable position** to do specific tasks. Try different positions, i.e., sitting vs. standing. Sitting takes 25% less energy than standing. However, some activities will be easier in standing depending on the height of the table/counter and the activity.
- Have a **comfortable work height**. Try 2 inches below elbow height when your shoulders are relaxed, when standing to work at a counter, or sitting to work at a table. Use higher surfaces for light activities, e.g., writing. Use lower surfaces for heavier activities, e.g., stirring.
- **Avoid heavy lifting** - slide, or use a trolley. Purchase or transfer items into smaller containers. Use lighter pots and dishes.
- Use two hands instead of one to lift or move items.
- Store items used most frequently within easy reach. This is usually at a height between mid thighs and shoulders.
- Watch your posture. Save energy by decreasing unnecessary muscle tension. Try to sit or stand with head balanced on your trunk, so that gravity helps maintain proper posture. Try to relax arms at shoulders.
- Use smooth, slower movements, not quick, jerky movements.

