

# How do I conserve energy and yet get my daily tasks done?

## Conserve energy by:

**Balance rest and activity.** Plan for rest periods and take them before you are fatigued. Better to rest for several short periods than one long period. This balance of rest and work is an effective weapon against pain and fatigue. It will increase your endurance and decrease the effort required to complete an activity. Pace yourself and stop before you hurt or have an increase in fatigue. If the fatigue is muscular, then start a different activity that does not increase the fatigue of the muscles but makes you use a different set of muscles or a different part of the muscles used before.

**Consider the time of day.** Depending on your rest and sleep patterns, morning can be a difficult time to work. Whichever time of day is your worst time, plan on using that time for easier tasks. Save the more stressful jobs for other times in the day.

**Budget the heavier jobs** – Do a little at a time, use adaptive equipment or ask for help later.

**Use your body effectively.** Good body mechanics.

## Principles of Motion Economy and Energy Conservation

**Look at the task get rid of all unnecessary work and steps;** example: decrease the number of trips between the refrigerator and stove the stove and the table by getting a cart to place things on. Organize what you are planning on doing. Maybe you use the cart for things throughout the house. Let your dishes air dry.

**Combine operations:** example: Fold clothing as you remove it from the dryer.

**Change the sequence of operations** – less when you are the most fatigued – tries to balance your energy throughout the day

**Simplify the operations in all ways that you can.** Even if everything cannot be made simple, you will have more energy for the ones that must remain the same.

**Become motion – minded.** This is an attitude of, stop, look at each job and see if it is being done in the most efficiency way possible. Make a weekly plan. Look at the self-value of those chores. Rank higher what has the most value to you. Consider giving the low ranking jobs to another to complete.

How is this done? Look at work simplification.

Work simplification is accomplished by reducing the amount of time and /or energy used to do a given amount of work. It is an organized plan for finding ways to simplify tasks and activities. Certain questions are always asked. Analyze the task to be done. Question the job and the equipment.

Why is it necessary?

This depends on your own value system. Ask yourself is it really necessary to get done? Will you hurt anyone if you leave it out? Can you adjust your standards either temporarily or permanently? Can it become someone else's responsibility to get done? Once that list is completed then moves forward to the following.

What is the purpose?

What needs to be done?

Keep a list to help you visualize the scope of the “jobs to do”. Try to rank them as to important to you.

When should it be done?

Does it need to be done at the time you are in the habit of doing it before?

Can the time be changed?

Try to find the best times to do the heavier work (when you are the least stiff or fatigued). Alternate heavy work with lighter work.

Where should it be done?

Change places if possible. Have the washer and dryer side by side or over and under. Use the closest bed room to the bathroom. Store materials where they are used. Duplicate cleaning items so you have a set in each room where you will use them.

Who should do it?

Be a supervisor and delegate responsibility. Use mechanical tools to help. Use an electric can opener, a food chopper, a dishwasher, the electric dryer.

How is the best way for you to do it?

Increase efficiency by applying the **principles of motion economy**. Also consider these additional suggestions:

- Consider muscles as tools. Use the right ones for the right job.
- Work in a well ventilated room.
- Maintain a good posture.
- Pace yourself - a moderate pace is the most productive. Use a slower pace if it is hot or humid.
- Rhythm- large circular movements are more efficient than back and forth
- Momentum - Make the weight of the tool do the work
- Use both hands whenever possible.
- Use the larger parts of the body to do the work as much as possible.
- Eyes - work in a well-lighted room with additional local light if needed for close work.
- Plan properly placed rest periods - if your work is sedentary (example: desk work), rest might be doing an activity in upright or walking positions.
- Eliminate unneeded steps, combine operations, and question the possibility of making changes in either the method, equipment order of work or the finished product.

Before you get started break down the job operations. Mentally list the details exactly as you will do the job. Get ready: collect all the tools and equipment you will need. Place in a logical order and within easy reach of the work area, Complete the job. Then clean up and put away all the tools and equipment so it is easily found for the next job.

Use **Heart of the Home a Guide to Job Improvement**, a sheet for any jobs you need to simplify.

**Work simplification** is accomplished by reducing the amount of time and/or energy used to do a given amount of work. Let's look at: time and energy saving hints, sitting to work whenever possible/ use of proper body mechanics, improving work areas: heights, arrangement of work areas/ use of wheeled transport, designs of utensils and equipment, good kitchen storage/overall storage.

### **Time and energy saving hints.**

- Avoid peeling vegetables; use packaged vegetables, precut or prewashed
- Don't strain over a stuck jar use a mechanical jar opener
- Avoid holding, use clamps or other stationary equipment (like beaters mixing stand verse hand held)
- Slide objects don't lift or carry them
- Mix the ingredients in the casserole container to decrease the number of dishes being used.
- Cook and serve with the same utensils
- Use oven to table cook ware
- Use nonstick pots and pans
- Use an air fryer for fried foods.
- Use a tray to serve food, or a cart. It will cut down on movements
- Locate switches and controls within easy reach
- Soak all dirty dishes immediately after use
- Organize all items to be washed
- Sit on a stool to wash dishes
- Air dry the dishes
- Sit whenever possible don't stand
- Use the assistance of gravity wherever possible
- Preposition tools so they are easy to grasp and use
- Use proper work heights: this will depend on the job and the individual
- Do your shopping by phone or the internet. Arrange a pick up time, pay and let the store load
- Cook larger quantities on your "good days" and freeze them so that you have meals to serve on "poor" days.
- Don't strains over a hot oven on days you feel poorly can use precooked foods?
- Don't wax the floors use a cleaning and waxing floor cleaner

### **Sitting whenever possible/ Good body mechanics.**

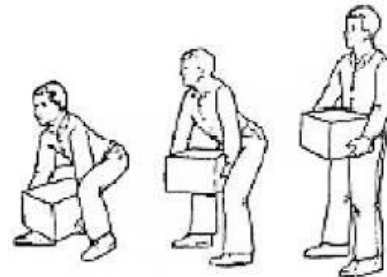
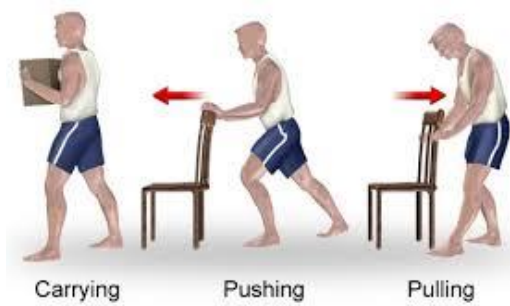
Sitting whenever possible.

- The chair should have a seat large enough to give full support, a back support from the lower back to below the shoulders so it does not stop use of the elbows. Feet can be on the floor or a foot rest of some type so that the feet are not dangling and there is pressure on the back of the thighs.
- Use a tall stool to sit and clean vegetables at the sink
- Use an adjustable ironing board and a chair to sit
- Wipe out the bathtub while you are still in it
- Sit on a showering chair when showering.
- Sit on the bed or a chair while dressing
- If shaving or putting on makeup tires you, rest your elbow on a box or anything that is high enough to hold your arm up to the level of your face. Have a seat and a lower mirror to look at yourself as you shave.



### Proper body mechanics.

Use of proper body mechanics and greatly simplify work. Correct body mechanics allows for the work to be handled by more sets of muscles and using the stronger ones in the body. The following drawing gives you an idea of proper body mechanics:





## Improving work areas.

Arrangement of work areas.

- There should be a definite and fixed place for all tools utensils and materials. Locate materials close to the point of where they will be used. In the kitchen, arrange specific centers for mixing, stove activities and sink activities.
- Materials utensils and equipment should be located to permit the best sequence of motions. Duplicate inexpensive items in work centers improves sequencing by eliminating steps (have 2 light weight vacuums if have 2 floors to vacuumed).

Work surface heights.

- Desirable heights allow you to sit erect but relaxed. Your elbows should be close to the body with the work below the point of the elbow.
- Work surfaces are best if they are about 3" below the elbow.
- Consider using low work counters with knee space, adjustable ironing boards or pull out tables (approximately 26 to 28" high).

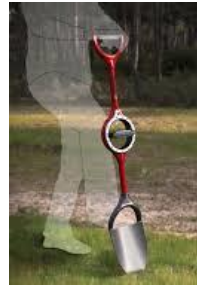
Use of wheeled transport.

- You can pick up many different types of wheeled carts.
- Use wheeled carts to transport dishes, glasses, dinnerware and food in 1 trip instead of 6 trips. If laundry is on the same floor as the bedrooms you can cart laundry to bed rooms all at once.
- Use a wheeled grocery cart or basket to take groceries from the car to the house.
- Use a cart to take cleaning supplies room to room
- Install casters on heavy furniture to move it when cleaning the floors



## Designs of utensils and equipment.

- Handles of cooking utensils and equipment should permit the largest amount of hand surface to be in contact with the handles. Handles should be heat resistance. Use equipment such as irons or knives that have finger impressions.
- Handles. Levers, controls should be located so one can use them with the least change in body position and with the greatest mechanical advantage, long handles on dust pans, vacuum cleaners that turn off and on with the foot, light weight vacuums.



## Improving storage areas.

For most people at home, the most storage needs is in the kitchen.

- Try to store the most used items between the hips and eye s as this is the easiest to reach. Store heavy and awkward things at waist level especially if you must use it frequently and are the one to retrieve it.
- Stack like items only
- Use roll out shelves or turn arounds to avoid lifting and moving.
- Hang things
- Use extra shelves (Rubbermaid) to prevent stacking and therefor lifting and restacking.
- Use drawer dividers to partition drawers.

