

## Conserving Energy

### Avoid unnecessary tasks

If you find yourself easily tired by everyday tasks, be strategic. Try combining tasks or foregoing:

- Wear a terrycloth robe to save yourself the extra task of toweling after bathing;
- Allow your dishes to air rather than towel drying them;
- Sit instead of standing to do your hair, shave, or put on your makeup. Sitting is known to use up 25 percent less energy than standing;
- Use an upright broom and sweeper, such as the Cassebella upright sweep set to avoid bending over; or if you have the means, you can invest in a robotic sweeper like the Roomba that can clean your floors at the push of a button;
- A grab and reach tool can be helpful to reach things that drop on the floor versus bending down to pick them up.

### Organize your activities

Simple scheduling can make a big difference between getting through a day comfortably or giving up mid-stream. As a rule, plan your most strenuous activities at the beginning of the day when you have the most energy. Plan ahead and alternate between tasks that are difficult and those that are easy. Be flexible and give yourself extra time to activities in the event you get tired.

### Reorganize your closets and shelves

It's funny how resistance we can be to change even if it can make our lives easier. The resistance often comes from the fact that we don't want people to see that we're ill.

One "invisible" way to make a change is to reorganize your closets, shelves, and drawers so that things are strategically where they need to be. Place the items you use most frequently between waist and shoulder height so you won't have to do a lot of bending or stretching to reach them. Keep all items in the area that you use them to avoid walking back and forth to retrieve them. And don't be afraid to put items where they are convenient rather than where they are "supposed" to be.

### Keep duplicates of frequently used items

If you can afford it, double up on certain household items to avoid lugging them around the house. For example, if you have a two-story home, keep one vacuum upstairs and another downstairs. Keep a trash receptacle in every room, and try to get a separate set of household cleaners for the kitchen and bathrooms. You'll use them up anyway and will save you a lot of time and energy having them close at hand.

### Cook on Sunday for the entire week

Preparing all of your meals on Sunday allows you to focus on that task on a day where there is less distraction from work or school. Simply freeze individual-size portions and pop them into the microwave for a hot and easy meal. Cooking on a Sunday also provides you the added bonus of having friends and family around to help out.

## **Invest in a rolling utility cart or four wheeled walker**

It is understandable that you would want to avoid the stigma of using an electric shopping cart at the store. A rolling utility cart is an excellent alternative given that everyone from seniors to college students uses them. They are also handy around to the house to carry multiple items from one room to the next. You can also place your portable O2 in it to push it around versus wearing it.

A four-wheeled walker usually comes with a seat and can have a basket underneath for storage. Using a rolling walker can reduce the work of walking, and having one with a seat allows you a place to sit and rest on longer walks. The basket underneath can be handy for items you want to carry or to hold your supplemental O2.

## **Ask for help**

Don't let pride wear you out. Delegate tasks that are too strenuous for you, such as scrubbing floors, moving furniture, or washing the car. If people don't offer to help, don't be cross. You shouldn't expect everyone to understand your limitations or appreciate what you are going through.

Instead of getting angry, reach out. You'll be surprised how many people are willing to help if you just ask.

## **Get disability plate or placard**

Talk with your doctor about the possibility of qualifying for a disability plate or placard so you can park closer to your destination. While you may be capable of walking the distance from the far end of the parking lot into the store, you could save that energy for other tasks. You are better off getting a placard and not using it, versus having to leave the shopping center because you cannot find parking within a walkable distance for you.

