Balancing rest and activity when recovering from an injury or illness or coping with a chronic illness is very important. Saving energy, also called energy conservation, allows you to accomplish everyday tasks. You may need to change how and when you do a task in order to not put unrealistic work demands on your body. **The way you do a job is as important as what you do.**

Remember to Plan, Prioritize and Pace yourself through each task:

- **Plan** out your daily schedule.
- **Prioritize** your tasks, so you get the most important things done first.
- **Pace** yourself, so you can get more done.

Apply the **3 Ps of saving energy** and the below tips to your daily life to help make tasks easier.

### General tips

1. Sit when doing a task. Standing takes more energy.
2. Do work with your arms instead of your legs. Working with your legs takes more energy.
3. Wait 30 minutes after eating before doing a task. Work done after a meal causes more demand for oxygen to your heart.
4. Avoid doing activities in temperatures above 80 degrees F with humidity and below 20 degrees F. Extremes of heat and cold have a dangerous effect on the heart.

### Pace yourself to save energy

1. Get at least 6 to 8 hours of sleep each night.
2. Rest for 20 to 30 minutes at least twice a day. If you get tired, stop and rest for 15 minutes whether you have finished the task or not.
3. Alternate easy tasks with hard tasks or spread a task out over the day.
4. Focus your energy on the things you can do.
5. Ask for help if the demands on your energy are too much. Hire help as needed.
6. Avoid stress.
Use labor-saving methods and devices to save energy

1. **Sit to work as much as possible.** Avoid crossing your legs. This interferes with blood returning to the heart.
   - Sit at a counter or table to prepare food.
   - Use a riding lawn mower.
   - Sit on a stool at a work bench.
   - Sit to dress, shave, do hair, put on make-up and dry off after a shower.
   - Sit to iron.
   - Use a shower bench to sit and a hand-held shower head in the shower.

2. **Organize work areas:**
   - Keep cleaning materials on each floor.
   - Store garden tools in the garage.
   - Store shaving equipment and cosmetics near the sink and mirror.
   - Store seldom used equipment out of the way.
   - Store frequently used items in the kitchen at chest height to avoid bending and stretching.

3. **Get rid of unnecessary work:**
   - Use a dishwasher.
   - Let dishes soak instead of scrubbing.
   - Use commercial pre-wash instead of scrubbing.
   - Air dry dishes rather than hand dry.
   - Cut open sealed bags. Do not tear them.
   - Wear no-iron permanent press clothes.
   - Use long handled mops, dusters and dustpans.

4. **Use automatic or electric appliances:**
   - Use an electric can opener, mixer, clothes dryer, sander, riding mower, electric saw and dishwasher.
   - Use cruise control when driving.
   - Use a rubber mat or wet towel under your mixing bowls to help steady them while stirring or mixing.

5. **Use good lighting and ventilation.**
6. **Use wheels to move things:**
   - A shopping cart for groceries.
   - A garbage can on wheels.
   - A cart for cleaning or repair supplies or to move heavy bags or laundry.

7. **Use both hands to:**
   - Lifts objects such as from the oven or refrigerator.
   - Push objects.

8. **Use proper body mechanics:**
   - Slide rather than lift.
   - Relieve back strain by keeping one foot up on a low stool while standing.
   - Use good posture when driving.
   - Do not lean forward unsupported. Instead rest your elbows on counter tops.
   - Bend at the knees to lift.

9. **Shopping tips:**
   - Make a list first.
   - Organize list by store aisle.
   - Shop at less busy times.

10. **Dressing and bathing tips:**
    - Wear button up clothing.
    - Wear loose clothing for easier breathing.
    - Sit while putting on shoes and socks.
    - Wear slip on shoes. Use a long-handled shoe horn and sock aid.
    - Use a terry cloth robe instead of a towel to dry off.
    - Use a shower bench to sit and a hand-held shower or a long-handled sponge.
    - Wear low-heeled shoes with shock absorbers.
    - Use an elevated toilet seat.

**Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.**

The Library for Health Information is available to help you find more health information at (614) 293-3707 or e-mail: health-info@osu.edu.

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