

Department of
Respiratory & Critical Care Medicine

Living Well with Breathlessness: Energy-Saving Strategies for Everyday Tasks

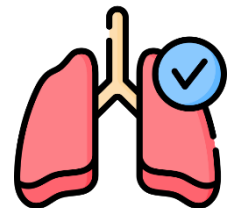


Foreword

People with chronic lung disease often face limitations in their physical endurance and may experience breathlessness during routine activities e.g. showering, grocery shopping

This booklet is designed to provide information on energy-saving strategies and practical tips to modify daily tasks to reduce effort for patients with lung conditions.

For any questions, please reach out to an Occupational Therapist.



Energy Conservation Principles



- Schedule your plans for the day or week in advance



- Prioritise activities that you would like to do in a day and ask someone to help you with less important tasks



- Take frequent breaks when you are completing a task
- Remind yourself: DO – REST – DO



- Alternate between light and heavy activities so that you can have sufficient rest in between



- Break up a task into multiple steps
- Example: take a break after washing your upper body and before washing your legs



- Pace your breathing when you are completing a task
- Example: when climbing a staircase or showering

Tips When Doing an Activity



- Slow down when you are speaking, laughing, eating or coughing
 - These actions can disrupt your regular breathing and cause shortness of breath/breathlessness



- Place commonly used items in easy-to-reach places
 - Avoid bending down or reaching over your head to get items



- Avoid excessive and continuous forward bending movements, such as washing your legs in a standing position, as these movements can cause you to feel breathless






- Use a trolley when you are transporting heavy objects



- Perform your tasks in a sitting position whenever possible, to avoid standing up for long periods of time

Energy Conservation Strategies for Daily Activities

1. Dressing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider wearing loose clothing that is easy to put on and take off• Sit on a chair to wear your pants• Use a long handled reacher or cross your legs to wear your pants	
2. Showering	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sit down to shower• Use warm water to shower• Shower when the weather is warm• Use a long-handled sponge and cross your legs to wash your back and legs• Ensure that your bathroom allows air to easily flow in and out (e.g. window is open)	
3. Toileting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a urinal (for males) or commode if you have difficulty getting to the toilet• Pace your breathing when passing motion (defecating)	 <p>Commode</p>

Energy Conservation Strategies for Daily Activities

4. Grocery Shopping

- Plan a shopping list so that you only buy what you need
- Use a shopping trolley to avoid -carrying your groceries by hand
- Take a few breaks in between if the distance to the market/ shopping mall is long



5. Sweeping

- Use a dry wiper sheet or wireless vacuum cleaner instead of a broom
- Walk with the dry wiper sheet stick or wireless vacuum cleaner when cleaning the floor, and avoid only using your arms
- Take a break after cleaning each room



6. Mopping

- Use a spin mop (with a handle to drain the water) or a wet sheet to mop the floor
- Take a break after cleaning each room
- Inhale when pulling in mop during mopping



Energy Conservation Strategies for Daily Activities

7. Hand Washing Clothes

- Sit down on a chair and hand wash your clothes in a sink



8. Getting Clothes Out of the Washing Machine

- Use a long handled reacher when retrieving your clothes from the washing machine
- Place your laundry basket on a stool to elevate its height
- Use proper breathing techniques and take a break when needed
(refer to point 12)

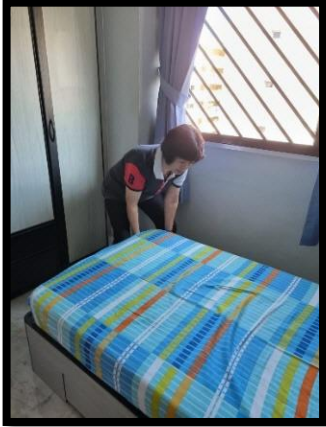




9. Hanging Clothes

- Hang your clothes on window grilles or indoor drying racks
- Use proper breathing techniques and take a break when needed
(refer to point 12)



Energy Conservation Strategies for Daily Activities

<p>10. Changing Bed Sheets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleep on a mattress with a bedframe • Place your bed away from the wall • Use lightweight bed sheets • Fold your bed sheet in on the side that you are standing on • Use proper breathing techniques and take a break when needed <i>(refer to point 12)</i> 	
<p>11. Cooking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare ingredients while sitting down whenever possible (e.g. cutting or washing vegetables) • Place a chair nearby to sit down and rest during cooking • Consider making smaller portions of ingredients or dishes to avoid carrying heavy pots of food 	
<p>12. Breathing Techniques</p>	<p>Inhale when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving against gravity (e.g. lifting things from the floor) • Doing a pulling motion (e.g. mopping the floor) • Lifting your arms (e.g. putting things above your head) 	

Action Plan

Tips I can apply / goals set with my Occupational Therapist

1)

2)

3)

Clinic 4A
TTSH Medical Centre, Level 4
Contact:
6357 7000 (Central Hotline)



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