

## Daily Activities the Easy Way

---

### *Information for Patients*

To help you conserve more energy and accomplish more, try following these tips.

### **Bathing and grooming**

- Use warm water instead of very hot water when showering or taking a bath. Avoid steam or humidity. Make sure your bathroom is well ventilated.
- Keep soap, towels, toothbrush, makeup, and other toiletries within easy reach.
- Sit down to wash yourself. Use a tub chair or shower seat. Sit to dry off.
- Use a hand-held showerhead.
- If you stand to shower, use an overhead shower organizer to avoid reaching or leaning.
- Use long-handled bathing tools, such as a long-handled bath sponge or brush, for easier reach.
- Use an elevated toilet seat or riser.
- Put grab rails in the bathroom.
- Equipment is available to make bathing easier. Discuss this with your therapist or nurse.

### **Dressing**

- Lay out clothes and toiletries before dressing.
- Wear clothes that are easy to move in.
- Wear low-heeled shoes.
- While sitting, put underwear and pants on at the same time so that you only have to stand up once.
- To put on your socks and shoes, bring your feet up instead of bending down.
- Hook your bra in front, then turn it to the back.
- Equipment is available to make dressing easier. Discuss the options with your therapist or nurse.

### Meal preparation and cooking

- Use lightweight equipment. Select plastic or aluminum tools and utensils with large or thick handles.
- Use light metal or plastic bowls instead of heavy glass. Use electric appliances such as a can opener or knife.
- Arrange the kitchen so that heavy items and the items you use the most are close to your work area. Avoid using low storage areas, especially for items used most often.
- Sit to remove items from low storage.
- To fill a pot with water, put it on the counter and use the spray attachment, then slide it over to the burner.
- Cook and serve in the same container.
- Avoid lifting a full pot by using a wire mesh colander or strainer to remove cooked food.
- Use easy-to-prepare foods.
- Use small appliances (they take less effort to use).
- Prepare meals sitting down.
- Soak dishes instead of scrubbing, and let dishes air dry.
- Prepare double portions and freeze half.

### Laundry

- Use permanent-press materials for curtains, tablecloths, and bedding.
- Use plastic table covers or placemats.

- Use lightweight or smaller sized towels.
- Avoid handling anything heavy, even if it means using a laundry service.
- Have all family members deliver and pick up their own clothes from the laundry area.
- In a single-story home, collect sorted clothes in a cart with wheels.
- Sit at a table, shelf, or counter to sort, iron, or fold clothes. Do not sit on the floor.
- Do not carry a laundry basket full of wet clothes. If no one can help, use a small basket, or a hand cart with wheels and carry only a few clothes at a time.
- When hanging clothes to dry, keep them within easy reach. Avoid bending down to pick up clothes. Place clothes on a hanger, then hang them on the line. When taking clothes down from a clothes line, place them in a cart or a basket on a chair.
- Use a steam iron or traveling iron.
- If something doesn't need to be ironed, don't iron it.
- Keep clothes to be ironed in a cart or on a table within reach.
- Sit to iron at a properly adjusted board. Avoid bending your back.
- Slide (don't lift) the iron on and off garments on a burn-proof pad.

### Housekeeping and cleaning

- Delegate housework as much as possible.
- Avoid doing all your housework in one day. Do some heavy and light chores each day.
- Get rid of dust-collecting clutter.
- Use “scrub-free” cleaning products.
- Keep products used most often on shelving and storage units within easy reach.
- Store supplies on a cart or wear an apron with deep pockets to keep items handy.
- Use a vacuum cleaner slowly and rhythmically. Walk with the vacuum cleaner instead of pushing and pulling it.
- When making the bed, finish one side before going to the other.
- Use wheeled trashcans or containers. When moving large trash containers, drag them. Do not lift.
- Do housework, including dusting, sitting down when possible.

### Grocery shopping

- Make a list first.
- Organize the list by store aisle.
- Use a grocery cart for support.
- Use a power scooter if available.
- Request store assistance with shopping and getting to the car.

- Shop at less busy times.
- Shop with a friend.
- Ask someone to do your shopping for you.
- Ask the grocery bagger to load more bags with less weight in each bag.
- Take the perishable items into the house first. Rest, and then get the non-perishable items.

### Yard work

- Avoid yard work when it is very hot outside.
- Ask for help with the heavy work such as gardening, mowing the lawn, snow shoveling, etc.
- Keep a bench, stool, or chair nearby when gardening so you can rest.
- Use a lightweight, self-propelled, power lawn mower.
- Cut grass weekly, if possible, to avoid the need to rake grass.
- Use a riding lawn mower if possible.
- Use lightweight, electric hedge trimmers.
- Use extensions on your handles. Build up the handles for a better grip.
- Sit to trim lower hedges.

## Child care

- Delegate child care when possible.
- Plan sitting-down activities. For example, draw pictures, play board games, read, and play computer games.
- Teach children to climb up on your lap instead of being lifted.

## Workplace

- Plan to do work when you have the most energy.
- Arrange your work space for easy access to frequently used equipment and supplies.

## Leisure

- Do activities with a companion.
- Select activities that match energy level.
- Balance activities and rest (don't get over-tired).

UPMC

Pittsburgh, PA, USA  
www.upmc.com

© UPMC 2008  
SYS264040 JPL/JT REV 4/08  
Form # 8494-82191-0408

---

For help in finding a doctor or health service that suits your needs, call the UPMC Referral Service at 412-647-UPMC (8762) or 1-800-533-UPMC (8762). Select option 1.

*UPMC is an equal opportunity employer. Policy prohibits discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, disability, or veteran status. Further, UPMC will continue to support and promote equal employment opportunity, human dignity, and racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. This policy applies to admissions, employment, and access to and treatment in UPMC programs and activities. This commitment is made by UPMC in accordance with federal, state, and/or local laws and regulations.*

*This information is not intended to be used as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. You should not rely entirely on this information for your health care needs. Ask your own doctor or health care provider any specific medical questions that you have.*