

Energy saving tips for COPD

FACT SHEET prepared by the Asthma and Respiratory Foundation

If you have Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), your energy may be limited, and yet life remains active. Plan your activities throughout the day and avoid rushing to meet deadlines. Organise your time so that you do the most energy-consuming activities at the time of the day or week when you have the most energy.

How do I save my energy?

Here are some hints to help you save energy, remove unnecessary activities from your day and take part in the activities you really enjoy.

Telephone:

- have a phone by your bed
- have a portable phone and carry it around with you
- take the telephone off the hook while showering, having a nap etc.

Kitchen

- store utensils and favourite ingredients within easy reach and between your waist and shoulder height if you can to avoid reaching and stooping
- use a tall stool for working at the kitchen bench and when you do the ironing
- BBQ tongs are useful for picking up things from the floor
- an electric fry pan or oven/grill on your bench is easier than a conventional oven
- allow dishes to air dry after washing

Bathroom

- install hand grips/rails next to bath, shower and toilet
- use a light sturdy plastic stool for sitting on in the shower and while drying and dressing
- an electric toothbrush takes the effort out of brushing and is better for your gum health
- putting on a towelling bathrobe after your shower reduces the work of drying yourself

Clothing

- stretch fabric/track pants are easier to manage than zips and buttons
- Velcro shoe fasteners are easier than buckles or laces

Appliances

- There are many tools, such as supportive, adjustable seating and beds, motorised carts and other helpful devices available on the market. Your local asthma society, pharmacist, GP or occupational therapist will be able to provide further information on where you can get these.

Outdoors

- Consider building up the garden to waist height
- make a garden of pots and window boxes
- use a stool or box to sit on while gardening
- long handled garden tools are helpful
- have your clothesline within easy reach
- a laundry trundler will reduce the need to

Emergency Measures

- keep a list of important phone numbers near the phone – e.g. doctor, after hours medical centre, relative, neighbour etc
- remember to use 111 for the ambulance or other emergency services
- develop a support system. There are devices that may be worn on the wrist or as a pendant that may alert support services if you need help. Ask your doctor for information about these
- arrange an 'urgent' signal with your neighbour, for example -
 - curtains not opened by a certain time in the morning
 - a set number of rings on the phone

For further information on energy saving tips in COPD see the booklet "Breathe Easier with COPD", or visit our website asthmaandrespiratory.org.nz

Remember to ask for help if you need it. It doesn't mean you are dependent it means that you are using your energy to its best advantage.

The Asthma and Respiratory Foundation can help you

The Asthma Foundation is New Zealand's not-for-profit sector authority on asthma and other respiratory illnesses. We advocate to government and raise awareness of respiratory illnesses, fund research for better treatments and educate on best practice. Check out our comprehensive website at asthmafoundation.org.nz