

When you are recovering from cancer treatment, you are likely to get tired very easily. This is called fatigue. It is important for you to use the energy you have wisely. Here are ideas to help you get more done and still have energy for things you enjoy.

## **Plan your day.**

- Decide what really needs to be done today and what can wait. Choose the two or three most important tasks. Set realistic goals that match your energy levels.
- It's OK to say no to tasks and activities that will tire you out too much. Think about whether you are the best person to do a job.
- Ask for help when you need it.
- Break large jobs into smaller tasks. Think about the steps needed to complete a job.
- Think about ways to make activities easier—for example, changing your body position and organizing your work area.
- Switch between rest and activity through the day.
- Your body tires faster in extreme temperatures. In hot weather, avoid activity at the hottest part of the day. In cold weather, layer clothing to stay warm.

## **Pace yourself.**

- Work slowly. Move in a comfortable rhythm.
- Limit activities that require quick bursts of energy.
- Stop an activity that makes you tense, angry, or frustrated. Try again later.
- Do some gentle stretches to warm up before you start an activity. Stretch again to cool down afterward.

## **Rest when you start to feel tired.**

- Listen to your body. Learn to match activities to your energy level.
- Take short naps of 15–20 minutes.
- Rest after meals, exercise, and strenuous activities.
- Stress drains your energy. Learn skills such as meditation or guided imagery to help you relax.

## **Organize your work area.**

- Set up your kitchen and other work areas so things you need are easy to reach.
- Work while sitting as much as you can.
- Keep your work area tidy so you don't have to spend energy looking for things you need.

## **Tips for Daily Activities**

### **Showering**

- Use a hand-held shower head. Sit on a shower stool.
- Use warm water. Hot water will tire you faster.
- Use a bath sponge with a long handle to reach your legs and back.
- Put on a terry cloth robe after your shower to save the effort of drying with a towel.
- Try showering at bedtime instead of during the day.

### **Housework**

- Keep sets of cleaning supplies in different parts of the house so you don't have to carry them from place to place.
- Use a cart on wheels to move laundry, or tie a rope to the laundry basket to pull it.

### **Shopping**

- Make a list ahead of time. Organize it by where the items are located in the store.
- Shop in familiar stores so it is easier to find what you need.
- Go when stores are not crowded.
- Use a shopping cart instead of a basket.
- Ask the bagger to put things that need to stay cold in the same bag. When you get home, put those things away first. You can put away the other things after a rest.

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## **Cooking**

- Make large batches of favorite dishes. Freeze single portions for times when you need a quick meal. Pre-packaged and frozen foods are also convenient.
- Use a fan to keep the kitchen cooler. Too much heat can tire you faster.
- Sit on a stool or chair while working at the table or counter.

## **Travel**

- Pack a few days ahead of time.
- Keep your medicines in your carry-on bag.
- Travel light. Take only what you need.
- Use a suitcase on wheels.
- If possible, schedule travel for less busy times.
- Pace your travel activities. Enjoy a few things well instead of exhausting yourself trying to do it all.

## **If You Use Supplemental Oxygen**

If you are on oxygen, here are more tips to help save your energy:

- Use a wheeled cart to pull your oxygen tank behind you.
- When showering, you may need more oxygen.
- When traveling, be sure to prepare for your oxygen needs. Your oxygen provider or airline may be able to help you set up service at your destination and en route.
- At higher altitudes, you get less oxygen with each breath. Your body has to work harder. When you go to higher altitudes, take it easy. You may need to limit the time you spend there.
- Protect your lungs from air pollution.
  - Check the air quality levels in your area before going outside. You can find current conditions for several areas in Utah at [air.utah.gov](http://air.utah.gov).
  - Do not exercise outside when pollution levels are high.
  - Avoid exercise near busy streets so you don't breathe exhaust fumes.
- Do not allow anyone to smoke inside.
- Avoid spray cleaners, hairspray, and perfumes.