



ENERGY CONSERVATION ANXIETY AND RELAXATION FOR CARERS

Using energy conservation techniques can help you to get through your day more efficiently, with less strain on your body; significantly reducing the fatigue and stress that is often associated with caring. Fatigue is your experience of tiredness, lack of energy, or accumulated exhaustion. Energy conservation is about building simple changes into your lifestyle to make the best use of your strength, effort, and time.

Pacing

Our energy levels vary from hour to hour. The key to energy conservation is to learn how to go at the right speed with the amount you have each day, reserving energy for the activities you most want or need to do. Take cues from your body and listen to yourself – our energy is not just physical but mental and emotional too. Slowing down everything from our walking pace, work rate, talking and thinking can save us a great deal of unnecessary exertion.

Prioritising

Decide what you have to do and what can wait for another time. Will it really matter if the housework isn't done today?

Planning

Be realistic about what you can achieve. Try to take pressure off yourself, decide not to waste energy on the things you can't change. Get organised, gather everything together that you will need to complete a task before you begin. Break activities down into shorter, more manageable parts and spread them over a longer period. You will still achieve what you want to do but without having the pressure of having to do it all in one go. Plan to have frequent rest periods, even a few minutes can help us catch our breath, collect our thoughts and carry on more refreshed.

Posture

Sitting and standing correctly can help us breathe more easily, taking pressure off the joints and muscles. It also allows our bodies to work less hard, enables better circulation and therefore is a means to conserve energy in the day. Where possible, squat or kneel beside a person who is sitting down rather than leaning over, twisting round or bending forwards to speak or carry out a task. If the person you care for uses a wheelchair, check

the handles are the right height for you to avoid hunching over or twisting whilst pushing. You should be able to keep your shoulders back and aligned, without sticking your chest or bottom out, with your 'push' power coming from your legs. If there is a dropped kerb or ramp, always choose that route rather than steps. Some wheelchairs are heavier than others. Ask the supplier or health professional if what you have is the most lightweight version appropriate for the user.

Positioning

Sit down instead of standing to do activities like domestic chores, where possible. For example, perch on a stool to chop vegetables or sort laundry sitting in a chair.

People

Ask for help from friends, family, health and social care providers, talk about how things are for you. Befriending, sitting services and other types of respite are available for carers. Every carer is entitled to have a carers assessment, no matter what your means are, ask for this via social services or your local carers association to find out what practical help you can receive.