

Work Simplification

Work simplification means thinking about the task and how it could be done differently to save you energy.

What do you do? - Whenever you are about to bend or lift - think about it first.

Why do you do it? – Is it necessary or can you avoid it e.g. use a trolley instead of carrying shopping; use laundry basket trolley to push washing to and from clothes line; use long handled aids instead of kneeling to garden or clean the floor.

Who should do it? – Are you the best person or can someone else do it e.g. shopping; ask family or friends.

When should it be done? – Not all in one day but spread over several days.

Where is the best place? – Try sitting rather than standing e.g. ironing, potting, cleaning car parts, preparing food.

Where to store it? – Commonly used objects are best kept between waist and shoulder height.

How can it be done more easily – There are numerous ways to do things which will suit different people e.g. get correct length tool (broom, screwdriver, mop etc); carry with trolleys and wheelbarrows; fitted sheets and continental quilts or duvets; kneel to tuck in sheets and blankets.

Whenever you go to do a task, think about the above:

What **Why** **Who** **When** **Where** **How** questions.

POSITIONING

- Avoid bending at the waist, raising arms over head and general vigorous movements.
- Sit down whenever possible.
- Raise level of work to avoid stooping.
- Do not work too low, kneel if unavoidable.
- Use long handled tools to avoid stooping.

PLANNING

- Plan the weeks work, distributing heavy activities on different days.
- Plan each day, allowing sufficient rest periods and distribution of heavy and light activities.
- Plan each activity to cut down unnecessary movement and utilise best positions.



Figure 4 - A) Patient putting away utensils on low shelves without using energy conservation techniques; B) Patient putting away utensils on low shelves using energy conservation techniques

LIFTING TECHNIQUES

- Avoid carrying or lifting heavy articles, or use a trolley.
- Slide rather than lift.
- Keep things at an easy reaching height.
- Do not bend or twist your back.
- Get as close to the object as possible.
- Stand with your feet slightly apart and one in front of the other in the direction you are going.
- Bend with your knees and hips only.
- Keep your arms straight and the object close to your body.

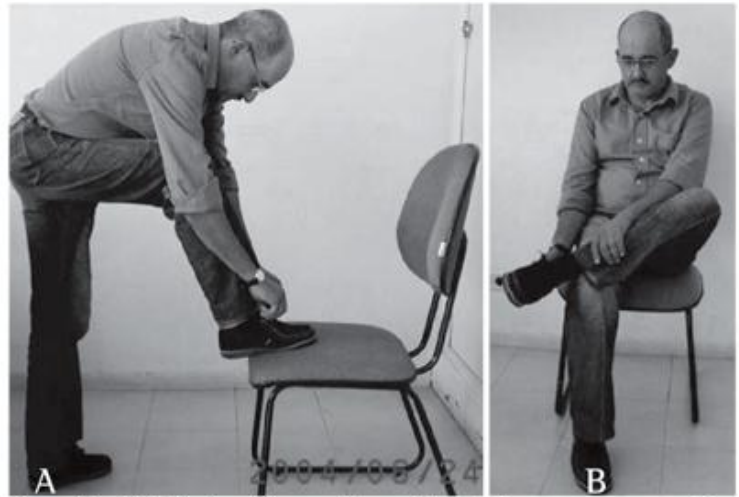


Figure 2 - A) Patient putting on shoes without using energy conservation techniques; B) Patient putting on shoes using energy conservation techniques

RELAXATION

- Use relaxation techniques throughout the day.

GENERAL

- Avoid exertion directly after meals.
- Guard against poor posture or anything which would cause restriction of the chest.
- Avoid strict routine. Be flexible in your approach to activities. Allow for days when you may feel more tired than usual.

HOUSEWORK

- Plan the week's housework of heavy activities for different days. e.g. washing, electroluxing.
- Alternate heavy and light activities through the day and allow for rests.
- Set weekly and daily realistic goals.
- Let other members of the family or friends help. e.g. meal preparation, shopping.
- Use long handled brooms and squeegee to do the floors.
- Use a kitchen trolley or wagon to carry heavier things from room to room.
- Have beds away from walls and castors on them to make bed-making easier.
- Avoid putting objects at ground level. Place them on the bench, table or chair.
- Use the vacuum cleaner with slow rhythmic movements and keep the attachments in your pocket or bench level.
- Carpet sweepers require less effort.
- Dust high surfaces with a long handled duster.

COOKING

- Plan the meal and the cooking method.
- Place ingredients and all food to be prepared on the work bench or table.
- Have articles and food that is used often, at an easy reaching height.
- Keep mixers, jug, toaster etc on the bench.

- Cook roasts in an oven-bag, to save cleaning the oven. Use a little water instead of fat.
- If possible have the stove next to the bench and at the same height, so that you slide pots instead of lifting them.
- Have a small foot-stool or ladder to get to higher shelves. Get onto your knees for things in low cupboards.
- Sit or perch at the bench or table with feet firmly on the floor. Open a cupboard door if necessary for knee space.
- If the stove is not near the bench, load a kitchen trolley with prepared food and take to the stove or oven. Remember to bend knees to put the food in the oven.
- Sit if possible to wash/dry dishes.

LAUNDRY

- Wash smaller quantities or do a wash more often.
- Use a stick to get washing out of the machine or tub.
- When hanging out the washing use a trolley or put the washing basket on a chair to save bending and lifting.
- If plastic pegs are used leave them on the line.
- Fold washing as you take it off the line, as it saves handling it twice, the clothes will then need little or no ironing.
- If buying a washing machine, get the type which loads from the top.
- The best type of clothesline is one, which can be wound up and down
- Have the washing machine and tub placed close together.



Figure 1 - A) Patient performing personal hygiene activities without using energy conservation techniques; B) Patient performing personal hygiene activities using energy conservation techniques

IRONING

- Iron as little as possible i.e. not sheets, tea-towels, towels or acrylic clothing.
- Use a steam iron if possible.
- Sit to iron, using a stool the same height as the ironing board or table.

SHOPPING

- Avoid rush hour shopping.
- Use the trolley to carry items.

GARDENING

- Do a little at a time with frequent rests and stretches.
- Weed, fork or dig when the ground is damp.
- Put weeds in a barrow rather than on the ground.
- If possible have a raised garden and use longer handled tools which are now available.



Figure 3 - A) Patient putting away utensils on high shelves without using energy conservation techniques; B) Patient putting away utensils on high shelves using energy conservation techniques