



Save your energy after a stroke

When you go home, it is important to remember that the activities you do every day are exercise. A few examples are:

- cooking
- cleaning
- personal care such as bathing and dressing

It is important for you to save your energy when you get home to get a good balance between work and rest. At first you will need extra sleep and rest to help your brain recover. You will only have a certain amount of energy to do all of the activities you need to do every day. If you use all of your energy for one task, you may not have enough energy left to enjoy your family or leisure activities. With the guidance of your therapy team you may be able to add more activities.

Tips to save your energy when you go home:

✓ **Plan ahead**

Learn to plan your activities and your exercises. Ask questions such as, “Does this task really need to be done?” and “Must it be done by me?” “Could it be done at a later time?” Plan to do your activities at a time when you feel rested, which may be in the morning.

✓ **Pace yourself**

Do only what you really need to do and rest between activities.
Stop when you are getting tired but before you are exhausted!

✓ **Avoid bending and reaching**

Long-handled tools make reaching easier. Keep things you use the most often within easy reach.

✓ **Sit down when you can**

Sit down when dressing, sorting laundry and preparing meals. You can use a shower chair in the tub.

✓ **Use good posture**

Use a chair with good back support. A footstool can help you reach your feet more easily.

✓ **Avoid straining or holding your breath**

This includes straining on the toilet, lifting heavy objects and trying to open stuck windows.

✓ **Avoid temperatures that are too hot or too cold**

Avoid exercising if it is too hot or too cold outside. Use warm water for showering.

✓ **Conversation and talking**

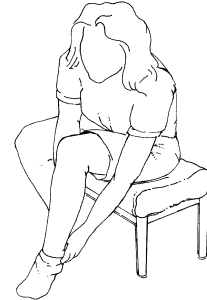
Carrying on a conversation with more than one person or being in a crowd may be tiring but is a good way to challenge your thinking and concentration.

If you become over tired because of this take a brief rest by leaving the room and return when you feel able. Your family and friends will understand if you tell them you need a quiet moment to yourself.

Ways you can save your energy

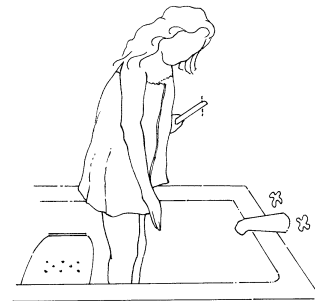
Dressing:

- sit when dressing
- have your clothes within arms reach
- wear loose-fitting clothing as it is easier to put on and take off
- sit to dress and do the lower part of your body first (as this takes up the most energy)
- If you have weakness on one side of your body, dressing the weaker arm or leg first may be easier to manage
- avoid bending



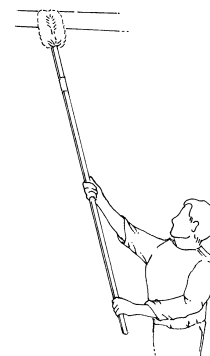
Grooming and bathing:

- sit on a stool or chair while washing, shaving or putting on make-up
- use a bath chair and hand-held shower to avoid standing in the tub
- use a long-handled sponge to clean your feet or back
- wear a long terrycloth housecoat to help dry off after bathing



Cleaning:

- clean one room at a time – if cleaning the whole house, spread the job over a number of days
- use long-handled scrub brushes for the tub and long handled dust pans to avoid bending
- have someone do the harder jobs for you like vacuuming and remaking the bed



Kitchen work:

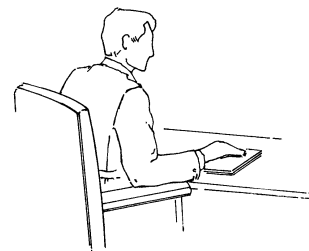
- store items used most often in the easiest place to reach (waist to below shoulder height)
- sit to prepare food
- organize your ingredients and work ahead of time to avoid extra walking
- prepare extra at meals and freeze for a future use
- allow dishes to air dry
- slide things on the counter or use a wheeled cart to move things in the kitchen

**Shopping:**

- use a delivery service to your home where possible
- use a cart to move shopping bags rather than carry them

**Working at a desk:**

- remember that posture is very important
- organize your work space to avoid bending and reaching
- take frequent stretch breaks

**Yard work:**

- do a little bit at a time
- avoid using your arms over and over such as raking, hoeing or weeding
- have someone help you with heavier jobs

