

# Energy Conservation

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## Conserving your energy when you can't slow down or rest

With [Fatigue](#) and [Post-Exertional Malaise](#), you will have a very limited amount of energy each day and a sense that if you push to get more done, you'll experience a "crash." The only way to increase energy in your "energy bank account" is by adapting your life to allow for more time to slow down and rest.

However, it may be difficult to slow down and rest when you have responsibilities such as work, bill payments, caregiving roles, and expectations from friends or family. In such cases, you may be able to use **energy conservation** strategies to get the most out of your limited amount of energy.

For many people, consistently "underspending" on their energy limits is the key to feeling better and being able to do more.



## Helpful strategies: Four P's of energy conservation

### Plan

- Take time each night to review the day and plan the next day
- List activities and schedule tasks that need to be done
- Schedule in breaks (activity-break-activity-break).]
- Do your activities based on when you feel best (for example, if you feel best in the morning, schedule more difficult tasks for the morning)

## **Pace**

- Break up a tasks by doing a little each day
- Take your time to do each task
- Plan to take a break before you feel tired
- Spread your “energy drainers” over the week
- Consider using [Heart Rate Monitoring](#) or an activity journal to help you pace
- See [Pacing](#) section of *MyGuide* for more

## **Prioritize**

- Decide which activities are the most important to you and do them first
- Invest your energy wisely
- Prioritize rest and recovery as a good energy investment
- If a longer rest isn’t possible, prioritize “micro breaks” of 1 to 5 minutes in between activities.

## **Position**

- Think about how you’re positioning your body when you do activities and aim to save energy using equipment when you can

- Some examples are:
  - Sit down when you are cooking or washing
  - Avoid lifting and carrying objects – put them in a cart
  - Use both hands if you want to lift something
  - Store items you use often within easy reaching distance

## Examples for Four P's of energy conservation

- Use a calendar or day planner to limit yourself to one or two bigger activities per day, with a scheduled space for rest in the middle
- Keep a “to do” list and be realistic about what you can do in a day
- Sometimes doing more can act as an “energy investment,” like taking time to set up online grocery shopping so that you don’t have to shop every week or cooking a big stew so you can freeze portions for later in your week
- Use a wheeled walker to help you save energy when carrying items – it can provide you with a seat when you find yourself waiting in a long line
- Use a shower seat and a hose shower head – these can make showering much less exhausting
- Have a “perching” high stool in your kitchen, bathroom, or other chore areas of your home so you can sit when doing activities with your hands

# Helpful strategies: Three D's

## Delete

- Remove any non-essential or unnecessary tasks from your “to do” list.
- Look at the responsibilities in your life that are “extra” – perhaps you committed to them when you had more energy. **Delete** them from your list.
- Examples include: intense exercise, volunteering roles, hosting gatherings

## Delegate

- If there is a task that can be done by someone else, **delegate** it to supportive people in your life. Ask family or a friend to do it for you.
- Look for other people who can help, such as local volunteer groups, a neighborhood dog walker, or a store clerk who can help you carry groceries to your vehicle. Or consider ordering your groceries online and have the shopping done for you.

## Defer

- Temporarily pause a task that doesn't need to be completed right away. You can schedule it later when you feel up to it.
- Often, using energy conservation strategies means you will feel better and find you have more energy another day. See what you can put off until you are feeling better.

# Conserving energy also means adapting to change

Adapting your activities to use less energy often means you have to change how you do things or rely on others to help.

It can be difficult to accept that you can no longer get things done the same way as you used to, and it can take time to adapt to a new routine.

Peer support is available to help with adapting activities and coping with learning to do things differently (please see [this link](#) for information on peer support groups for long COVID).

## Where to next?

- Learn more about [Fatigue](#) and [Post-Exertional Malaise](#), and [Pacing](#).
- Consider using [Heart Rate Monitoring](#) or an activity journal to help you pace.
- Click [here](#) for information on peer support groups for long COVID.
- Click [here](#) to access resources for Post-Viral Fatigue Resources.

