

Managing Breathlessness – PLAN, PREPARE, PACE, PAUSE

When breathlessness or fatigue limits your ability to commence, continue or complete an activity remember to **PLAN, PREPARE, PACE & PAUSE**

PLAN how you will carry out the task.

PREPARE all the items you will need to complete the task.

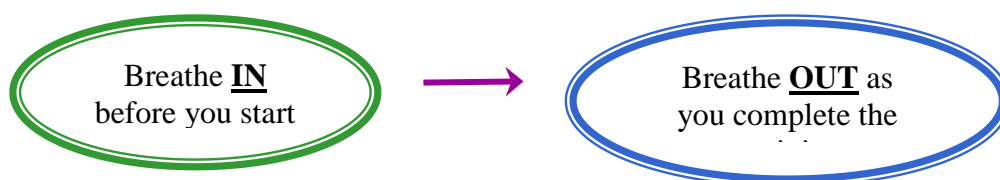
PACE yourself and slow down during the task.

PAUSE and rest whenever needed.

Before stopping an activity, consider whether you could make it easier by using the following energy saving techniques.

1. *Control and coordinate your breathing with daily activities*

People with lung disease use more energy simply to breathe. Therefore, it is important to coordinate your breathing with all activities. Even the simplest tasks use energy.



- ☐ Standing Up: Breathe in before you move. Breathe out as you rise up from your seat.
- ☐ Lifting an object above your head: Breathe in before you lift. Breathe out as you lift your arms above you.
- ☐ Putting on shoes: Breathe in before you move. Breathe out as you bend down to put on your shoe.

2. Reduce strenuous movements

Keep your arms and body close to the activity you are performing:

- Carry objects close to your body.
- Organise equipment or food to be within easy reach.
- Keep most activities between waist and shoulder level:
 - Store commonly used items on middle shelves between your waist and shoulders.
 - Work at benches that are at waist height.
- Use long handled equipment (for example, long handled reachers, long handled pruning shears, a broom, a dressing stick, a sock aid and a bathing brush).

Bring your feet to you (for example, rest your foot on your knee to towel dry, put on socks, and tie up your laces).

Avoid heavy lifting:

- Use trolleys, push rather than pull, slide rather than lift.
- Let your bigger muscles do the work – squat with your legs, avoid bending your back.
- Ask for help.
- Divide the load e.g.: groceries, half fill the kettle.

3. Take frequent rest breaks

Continuing to work until you are out of breath may then take you longer to recover. So take regular breaks to rest and recover while working. Don't wait until you need a break.

4. Plan and prepare before you perform tasks

- High expectations can lead to frustration, so be patient with yourself and set achievable goals.
- Challenge old habits. Ask yourself 'Is it essential that this task be performed in the usual way?'
- Plan for rest breaks and interruptions.
- Break jobs into smaller steps.
- Prepare and prioritise.
- Use a diary or calendar to plan daily, weekly and monthly tasks.
- Put items where they can be found easily and quickly.

- Keep most frequently used items between waist and shoulder level.
- Use equipment that makes the job easier, eg. light weight crockery, long handled reachers, long-handled garden equipment, stools, trolleys, velcro shoes, buttonless shirts and clothes that don't need ironing.

5. *Pace yourself:*

- Use slow, rhythmic movements.
- Alternate light and heavy activities
- Spread heavier tasks throughout the day, week and month.
- Learn to ask for help, or get someone else to do the task, such as family members, community services, neighbours, volunteers or friends. Asking for help does not mean you are dependent, it means you are using your energy to its best advantage.

6. *Avoid extremes of temperature*

Hot or cold environments place greater demand on the body which may increase feelings of breathlessness, fatigue, discomfort and anxiety.

- Avoid strenuous tasks, particularly in hot weather.
- Where possible, control the temperature in your environment.
- Use fans, air conditioners, heaters.
- Avoid extremes in temperature.
- Reduce steam – open doors, windows.
- Find the time of day that is best for you to complete activities

7. *Avoid activity after a meal*

Avoid strenuous activity after meals.

8. *Relax*

- When you feel worried, anxious or uptight your body uses a greater amount of energy.
- This can add to feelings of being tired or breathless.
- Relaxation can help restore energy.
- Concentrate on relaxing your muscles and slowing down your breathing