

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ENERGY CONSERVATION FOR POST-POLIO

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In occupational Therapy, the focus of treatment for Post-Polio is Energy Conservation.

ENERGY CONSERVATION techniques applied to daily living activities increase endurance, maintain strength and muscle power; therefore preventing muscle strain, respiratory and cardiovascular stress.

ANALYZE how much energy and endurance you have in one day. How do you want to use that energy? What are your priorities and goals?

PACE YOURSELF.

Allow ample time to complete each task. Take your time with tasks and rest before you are really tired.

ESTABLISH A ROUTINE.

Plan each day to include only what you can realistically accomplish. Leave enough time for leisure, relaxation, self-care, career, and social activities. Write out a schedule. Include meaningful activities.

- a. Space more demanding tasks out over entire week.
- b. Avoid doing too many strenuous tasks in one day. You can space tasks and perform some in a.m. and some in p.m.; pace activity with rest.
- c. Simplify tasks; if you've had a busy day, sit down while you wash dishes or prepare meals. Prepare simple meals with short preparation time.

ARM WORK.

Activities requiring arm work cause greater changes and stress on cardiovascular and respiratory system than does leg work. Studies with post-polio syndrome report that overwork of muscles can lead to weakness, loss of strength and function.

Be aware of straining and vigorous arm movements as it increases muscle and joint strain.

Avoid resistive (isometric) activities which tense your body without motion, for example: pushing, pulling and heavy lifting.

Modify these activities.

- When carrying groceries and luggage, lighten loads. Avoid carrying children.
- Modify showering, dressing, gardening, scrubbing, washing windows, vacuuming.
- Avoid opening tight jars and windows.
- When transferring in and out of a wheelchair, use a sliding board to scoot instead of using arms to

push body weight.

AVOID OVEREXERTION AND FATIGUE.

For long-term goal of maintaining endurance and muscle strength, avoid overexertion and fatigue through mobility options available. These considerations can be used part-time as needed.

MOBILITY OPTIONS TO MAINTAIN ENDURANCE AND MUSCLE STRENGTH:

- a. Three wheeled carts; Scootas, Amigos; to avoid walking long distance, conserve energy, useful with traveling, shopping, used on gravel and grass.
- b. Electric Wheelchair; to increase endurance, avoid arm work, muscle and respiratory strain.
- c. Manual lightweight wheelchairs--less arm work required.

PROPER BODY MACHANICS are important to prevent strain on muscles, joints, bones, and prevent back pain.

- a. Sitting
- b. Standing
- c. Lying
- d. Posture Adaptations
 1. Back supports
 2. Wheelchair cushions
 3. Chairs

ENVIRONMENTAL ADAPTATIONS

Need for enviornmental adaptations can be assessed by an Occupational Therapists, whether you need a speaker phone, wheelchair ramp, lowered light switches and closet racks, or suggestions on accessible kitchen or work enviornment for optimum energy conservation and body mechanics.



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