



**Wrightington, Wigan and
Leigh Teaching Hospitals**
NHS Foundation Trust

Managing your energy levels - Breathlessness Intervention Service

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Leaflet 8: Managing Your Energy Levels

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Source: CUH Patient Information

This leaflet is designed to help you manage your stable long-term breathlessness. If your breathing is worsening or you experience breathlessness as a new sensation, seek medical advice from your GP.

Why Do I Feel More Tired?

Tiredness (fatigue) is common in many long-term conditions, especially with breathlessness. It can reduce motivation to stay active, leading to a cycle of inactivity and increased fatigue. While we can't eliminate tiredness, there are ways to manage it, helping you stay active and do the things you enjoy.

What Can I Do to Help My Energy Levels?

- **Understand and Monitor Energy Levels**
- **Conserve Energy**
- **Keep Active**

Energy Levels

Think of your energy as a jug or battery. Plan your energy usage, leaving some in reserve for unexpected events. Monitoring activities and how they affect your energy can help you plan a balanced routine.

Monitoring Your Energy

Track daily and weekly activities to identify patterns. Note which activities give energy (energy givers) and which drain it (energy depleters). Avoid all-or-nothing patterns. Use an 'Activity Diary' to support energy monitoring. Speak to our team for assistance.

Energy Conservation

Balance activity and rest, alternating types of activities to avoid overexertion. Small changes can improve energy efficiency and quality of life.

Five Principles of Energy Conservation:

1. **Prioritising:** Identify high-priority activities that boost your energy, not just those you must do.
2. **Planning:** Control what you do and when. Plan activities for optimal times and balance heavy and light tasks.
3. **Pacing:** Slow, steady activity reduces fatigue. Break tasks into manageable parts and rest regularly.
4. **Positioning:** Maintain good posture and organize your environment to minimize energy use.
5. **Permission:** Allow yourself to do things differently to conserve energy. Recognize current achievements and ask for help if needed.

Keeping Active

Regular exercise helps with energy levels and prevents muscle weakness. Even gentle daily exercise can be beneficial. Refer to [Leaflet 7: Physical Activity and Exercise](#) for more information.

Putting It Into Practice

Self Care

- Keep frequently used items close.
- Gather all needed items before bathing or grooming, and sit if possible.
- Use an electric toothbrush/shaver.
- Wear a towelling robe after washing to dry off.
- Reduce bathroom steam by running cold water first and ventilating the space.
- Choose clothes with front fastenings and dress lower body by bringing knees/feet up.

Walking and Climbing Stairs

- Pace breathing with steps: inhale over one step, exhale over the next two.

- Move at a comfortable pace and avoid holding your breath.
- Use walking aids if helpful and rest as needed.
- Have resting points on stairs and use handrails.

Eating and Drinking

- Eat frequent small meals and take smaller bites.
- Avoid hard-to-chew foods and add sauces.
- Stay hydrated with frequent sips of fluid.
- Use frozen or pre-prepared foods and freeze leftovers.
- Cook vegetables together and use a basket to drain them.
- Sit while preparing food.

Shopping and Cleaning

- Use a trolley instead of a basket when shopping.
- Plan shopping lists by aisles or consider online shopping/delivery.
- Put away perishable items first if tired after shopping.

Managing Your Energy Levels

Daily Activities

- **Rest before finishing tasks:** Accept help from the cashier with packing.
- **Cleaning tips:** Use lightweight appliances, sit down when possible, and consider having a set of cleaning equipment for each floor.
- **Bin collection:** Request assistance from your local council if needed.

Sleeping

- Maintain a regular sleep pattern by going to bed and waking up at the same time each day.
- Avoid excessive daytime sleeping; opt for short naps instead.
- Wind down before bed and avoid caffeine, alcohol, and sugar.
- Ensure your bedroom is dark, quiet, tidy, and at a comfortable temperature (18°C to 24°C).
- Consider sleeping in an elevated position to ease breathlessness.

General Tips

- Rest before, during, and after activities. Frequent short breaks can be more beneficial than long ones.
- Use equipment or aids to conserve energy. Discuss options with your occupational therapist or physiotherapist.
- Stay positive and engaged in enjoyable activities, adapting them if necessary.

Further Information

For additional help or advice, contact the Breathlessness Intervention Service at [this link](#) or call 01223 274404, Monday to Friday, 09:00 to 17:00.

"Try to stay positive and remain engaged in the activities that you enjoy the most, even if you have to adapt the activity or the way you engage with it."

Contact Information

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[Contact Enquiries](#)

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Additional Resources

For advice and support in quitting smoking, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Help accessing this information in other formats is available. Visit our [patient information help page](#) or call 01223 256998.



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