

## How to Save Your Energy Strategies for Getting Washed and Dressed

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Many people with lung disease get tired and short of breath when washing and dressing. This is caused by the impact of movements such as:

- reaching overhead
- rubbing and scrubbing
- twisting
- reaching your feet
- standing (when combined with any of the above actions)

These movements:

- increase your heart rate
- increase the amount of oxygen your muscles need
- increase the work of breathing

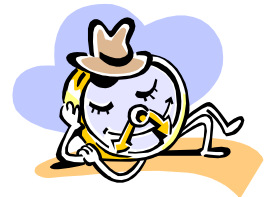
You can use the tips in this handout to:

- reduce shortness of breath
- reduce fatigue
- feel better

### Remember and Practice the 4 Ps

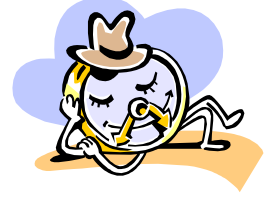
#### **P**ace yourself:

- Take regular rest breaks and rest breaths throughout the task.
- Slow down! Do not rush. Rushing causes you to feel much more tired.
- Avoid holding your breath. Practice keeping a slow and steady flow of breathing in and out.
- Use pursed lip breathing. Breathe in through your nose and out from your mouth.



## Pace yourself:

- Breathe in before you start each movement.
- Breathe out when:
  - Stepping over the tub or shower stall ledge
  - Reaching for your legs or feet
  - Lifting your legs to take your clothes off and on
  - Reaching over your head
  - Standing up and sitting down

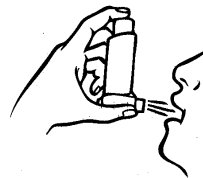


- Stop and take a rest before you get tired.



- Use slow flowing movements instead of quick jerky ones.

- Use your puffer if you need to.



## Prioritize and Plan

- Plan to shower or bathe when you have the energy.
- Gather all the supplies you need to shower or bathe so you do not have to walk back and forth to get things you need.
- Gather all your clothes together before you start to get dressed.



## Position yourself to save energy

### Sit down

Sitting supports your body so you can focus on your breathing and your activities. Standing to shower, wash at a sink or get dressed, adds extra demands on your body.

If you get short of breath when washing and dressing, sit when you:

- take off or put on your clothes
- reach over your head or towards your feet
- shower
- dry yourself - especially your lower body
- brush your hair
- shave or put on makeup



## Tools to Help

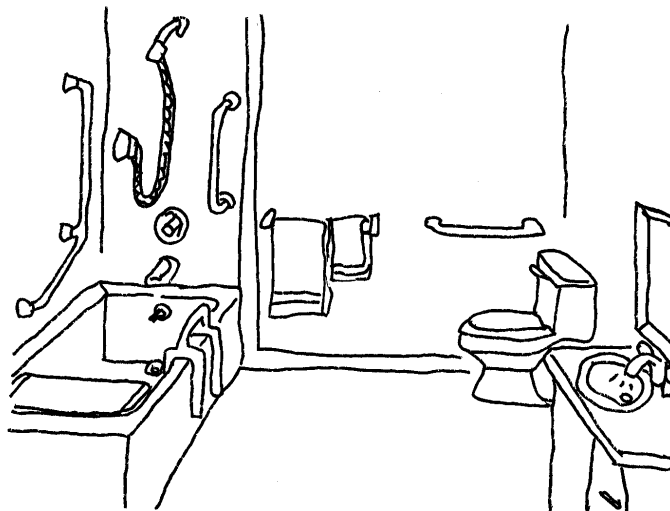
- These are called assistive devices.
- Use a long handled sponge or brush to help wash hard to reach places.
- Use a dressing device such as a reacher, long handled shoehorn, sock-aid and elastic shoelaces.
- Wear a terry cloth robe to dry off instead of towels.
- Dry your feet with a hairdryer on a low setting.
- Use an electric toothbrush or shaver.



## Bathroom Equipment

- Many items can help you save energy and be safe in the bathroom.
- A hand held showerhead helps you control the water better.
- Grab bars or tub-grips help you get in and out of the tub or shower safely.
- A bath-seat helps you save energy when washing.
- A non-skid mat will help prevent slips and falls.

**Here is a picture of a bathroom with many safe and helpful items:**

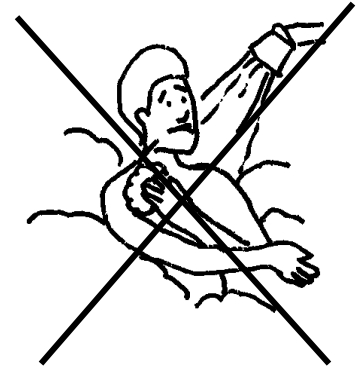


## Reduce steam

Many people with lung disease find that steam from the shower or running water makes it hard to breathe.

To reduce steam, you can:

- Turn the cold water on first and then add warm water.
- Keep the door open slightly.
- Turn on the bath room fan if you have one or open the window a bit.
- Turn off the water as soon as you finish rinsing.



## Who can help?

Contact your Occupational Therapist if you have more questions about tips on how to save your energy.



## NOTES:

Some pictures from VHI Exercise Software Respiratory Edition®1999-2005