

FREE RESOURCE · FATIGUE

The Energy Conservation Guide

Think of energy like a daily budget. These four steps help you spend it on what matters most.

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Fatigue from illness, recovery, or a busy life means you start each day with a limited amount of energy. Spend it all by noon and the afternoon runs on empty. Energy conservation — a core occupational therapy approach backed by clinical trials — isn't about doing less forever. It's about spending wisely.

- 1 Prioritize: Must, Should, Could**
 Each morning, pick **one Must**, a couple of **Shoulds**, and let the rest be **Coulds**. Ask: does this need to happen today? By me? Perfectly?
- 2 Plan around your strong hours**
 Do your hardest tasks when your energy is highest. Mix heavy and light tasks, and spread chores across the week. Gather everything before you start.
- 3 Pace: rest before you need to**
 Take short 2–5 minute rests *before* you're worn out. Stop at "I could do a little more." Try 20 minutes on, 5 minutes off.
- 4 Position: sit, slide, and use tools**
 Sit to shower, cook, and dress. Keep everyday items between hip and shoulder height. Slide instead of lift. Carts, reachers, and grocery delivery all save energy.

Breathe while you work

Breathe out as you push, lift, or stand up. Holding your breath uses more energy and raises your blood pressure.

Start with one step

Choose one of the four steps this week. Once it feels natural, add the next. Use the log on page 2 to find your strong hours.

LEARN MORE

- **Royal College of OT** — "How to conserve your energy": rcot.co.uk
- **National MS Society** — fatigue resources: nationalmssociety.org

KEY EVIDENCE

- Mathiowetz VG, et al. *Mult Scler*. 2005;11:592–601 (energy conservation RCT).
- Blikman LJ, et al. *Arch Phys Med Rehabil*. 2013;94:1360–1376 (review).
- Barsevick AM, et al. *Cancer*. 2004;100:1302–1310 (cancer fatigue RCT).

Make it personal: take the free 60-second quiz or book a **free consultation** at wholelivingwithnikki.com — services are pay what you can.

Educational wellness information, not medical advice or treatment. Check with your care team before starting new activity. Stop if you feel pain, dizziness, chest pressure, or shortness of breath.



MY DAILY ENERGY LOG

Find your strong hours

Use this for 3 days. Rate effort and fatigue from 1 (very low) to 10 (very high). Print as many copies as you like.

Day: S M T W T F S (circle one)

Today's plan — one Must, a couple of Shoulds, the rest are Coulds

MUST	SHOULD	COULD

Time	What I did	Effort (1–10)	Fatigue after (1–10)	Notes (rest, M/S/C, how I felt)
Early morning				
Mid-morning				
Late morning				
Midday				
Early afternoon				
Mid-afternoon				
Late afternoon				
Early evening				
Evening				
Bedtime				

My strong hours were:	What drained me most:	Tomorrow I'll try:

Tip: look for patterns across 3 days — the times of day when your fatigue stays lowest are your strong hours. Save your Musts for those times.