

Home Maintenance and Gardening

How to Conserve Your Energy

If your health has changed, ask your doctor when it's safe to do these chores again. If a job is too hard, ask for help or hire a professional.

Indoor repairs

- Keep a file to hold the details about all your appliances, such as warranties and maintenance schedules. Include a list of phone numbers for equipment repair.
- Keep your equipment well maintained. It is easier to keep it in good working order and work on small projects than to wait until there's a big problem.
- Store often-used tools and supplies together within easy reach. You may want to include hardware, rags, etc.
- If you have a workbench, use shelves or a pegboard to keep tools within easy reach. Sit at the workbench; don't stand.
- When working on tasks low to the ground, sit in a chair, on a stool or on the floor. Don't crouch.
- Use long-handled tools for painting, changing light bulbs and other tasks that require reaching.
- Use power tools (such as a cordless drill, screwdriver or saw).

Outdoor work

- Avoid working in very hot, cold or humid weather. Dress for the weather. Take breaks and drink plenty of fluids.
- Use power tools, lightweight tools and long-handled trimmers.
- Use a lightweight cart or wheelbarrow to carry debris or equipment.
- **When mowing the lawn:** Use a self-propelled or riding lawn mower. If your lawn is large, mow a part at a time. Mow before the grass gets too long. Avoid pushing the mower uphill.
- **When raking or sweeping:** Use long, easy strokes. Move the whole body in rhythm. Take breaks, do small areas at a time or switch off between raking and other tasks.
- **When hoeing or weeding:** Sit to work when you can. If standing, don't bend at the waist—kneel or bend at the knees instead.
- **When shoveling snow:** Use a snowblower or arrange for help.

Gardening

If you enjoy working in the garden, a few changes will make gardening easier. Try any of the following:

- Make your garden smaller.
- Move gardens closer to the house, so you don't have to walk as far.
- Plant perennials (plants and flowers that come up each year).
- Garden in large, plastic pots or planters.
- Use raised gardens or place pots on higher surfaces. This way, you won't have to stoop and bend.
- If you work close to the ground, use a kneeling pad or a stool. Think about buying a rolling garden stool (which also stores equipment).