You can also consider ‘the four ‘D’s’

Dump it – Once you have decided which tasks are priorities, you should consider if any are unnecessary and can be eliminated. For example, is it essential that you iron everything?

Delegate it – Consider which tasks you would feel happy for someone else to do for you. For example, could friends and family assist with heavy tasks such as shopping or housework?

Delay it – Could you spread tasks out rather than doing them all at once? Many people feel they have to get up, bathed, dressed, make the bed, prepare breakfast and wash up all in one go. Why not have your bath at night or leave making the bed until later?

Do it differently – For tasks that you really have or want to do think about ways to make it easier, therefore saving energy. For example:
- Use ready prepared meals
- Shop at the quietest times
- Use a towelling dressing gown to dry yourself after washing
- Write your shopping list in the order of the layout of the store so that you do not have to walk as far
- Leave dishes to soak instead of scrubbing them, or use a dishwasher if you have one

Useful equipment

There are items of equipment that can help you to save a little energy. Many of these are available in high street stores, such as long handed dustpans and brushes, jar openers, and electric tin openers. Others will require advice from an Occupational Therapist, these include perching stools (to sit on while cooking and washing), bath aids and raisers to ensure your chair, bed, and toilet are at the easiest height.

Finally

Fatigue management is about making simple changes to your routine and where appropriate accepting assistance or using equipment. Making these small changes can help you to use your energy most effectively and feel more in control of your body.

Managing fatigue

Useful equipment

There are items of equipment that can help you to save a little energy. Many of these are available in high street stores, such as long handed dustpans and brushes, jar openers, and electric tin openers. Others will require advice from an Occupational Therapist, these include perching stools (to sit on while cooking and washing), bath aids and raisers to ensure your chair, bed, and toilet are at the easiest height.

Finally

Fatigue management is about making simple changes to your routine and where appropriate accepting assistance or using equipment. Making these small changes can help you to use your energy most effectively and feel more in control of your body.
**Understanding fatigue**

Fatigue is a common symptom of long term illness. It is often described as a constant tiredness that interrupts normal activities and cannot be relieved by rest. Fatigue affects different people in different ways, but can often affect you physically, psychologically and emotionally. As your body requires energy to do even the basic everyday things, this can be really difficult.

The aim of this leaflet is to help you to use your energy efficiently through use of energy conservation techniques.

**Causes of Fatigue**

- The cause can be the disease itself
- Treatments such as radiotherapy, chemotherapy or surgery
- Anaemia
- Poor sleeping pattern
- Poor diet
- Pain
- Anxiety and depression
- Breathlessness

If possible, any of these causes should be treated. You can always seek help and advice from your healthcare teams.

**Effects of Fatigue**

- Difficulty doing everyday activities such as bathing, dressing or cooking
- Feeling of having no energy
- Having difficulty thinking, decision making or with memory
- Feeling breathless or dizzy after only limited exertion
- Difficulty sleeping
- Irritability

**Ways you can help**

**Diet**

- Try to eat at the times of day when you have most energy
- Eat little and often rather than big meals
- Try different foods if your taste has changed
- Try build-up drinks if you find it difficult to eat
- Drink plenty of liquids

**Exercise**

- A little exercise can help with the feeling of fatigue, but it is important to keep a balance between activity and rest and not wear yourself out
- Carrying out everyday activities you enjoy is often as valuable as a pure exercise routine
- Monitor how you feel after exercising and if necessary adjust how much you do

**Sleep**

- Keep a regular sleeping pattern even though you may feel tired; try and get up at a regular time each day
- Short day time naps might be helpful
- If you cannot sleep it is better to get up and read, or watch TV rather than lie awake
- Avoid stimulants such as alcohol or coffee before bed, try a snack or milky drink instead

**Relaxation**

Stress can make you feel very fatigued and also affect your ability to sleep. Try and find a relaxation technique that works for you.

**Making the most of your energy**

For many people fatigue is a condition that has to be managed rather than cured. Energy conservation can be really effective; the principles are based on ‘the five ‘P’s’:

- **Prioritising** - Try and take some time out and decide which activities are most important to you. Including activities that you enjoy, and add to your quality of life, is just as important as essential "must-do" tasks.
- **Planning** - It may be helpful to keep a diary to record the times of day when you have the most and least energy, and use this to plan your day.
- **Positions** - You use a lot of energy standing so try and sit down to do tasks wherever you can - always have a stool nearby in the bathroom and kitchen to use when washing and cooking. Choose items that help you to avoid exertion, for example long handled mops or dustpans. Sit in a chair that supports your back and arms.
- **Permission** - Give yourself permission to NOT do things without feeling guilty. If you’re worried about how to explain why you prefer not to do something you could say: “Trinity says...”