

Keeping *active* around your home

Tip Sheet

Tips for aged care support workers to share with their clients to encourage them to keep active around the home and garden.



SMR Alliance

Working together to maximise the wellbeing
of older people and people with a disability

How to use this tip sheet

This tip sheet is part of the *Keeping active around your home* toolkit.

Use this tip sheet to support conversations you're having with your clients. Put the tips into your own words. Add your ideas about things you've seen work for yourself or other clients.

Use your judgment about which tip is suitable for each of your clients and their current interests, abilities, motivation and confidence. If you're considering mentioning a new piece of equipment, think about whether it's within your client's budget.

You may have clients who want to make their household tasks more active so they

can get more of the health and wellbeing benefits of movement. The "How to make it more active" tips are for them. These tips make household tasks more of a workout.

Consider whether your client currently has the ability to perform these more active tasks. You may need to check with your supervisor.

You can print the tip sheet and keep it handy in your work folder. When you've having conversations with your client you can share one or two tips you think are suitable for their current abilities and interests.

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RED HAT FILMS

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Keeping active around your home.

Tips to share with your clients.

PLAN YOUR TIME

Find activities you like to do around your home, yard and garden that get your body moving.

Spread them throughout the day.

Spread heavy activities like vacuuming over the week.

If you have someone who helps with heavy activities, have a think about what you can do in between their visits. Dusting and light sweeping are nice and easy.

Make sure you have a day off. Rest is important and if you've been active all week you've earned it! Plan something you enjoy.

USING YOUR PLANNER

Fill in the planner. Can you see that activities are spread over the week? Are heavy activities placed on different days? Is there a day off?

Is there a variety of activities in one day?
Are there rest breaks between tasks?

Put the planner somewhere you can see it. The fridge is good.

At the end of the month have a look at your planner. Do you want to change anything?

Tick off activities as you do them. This gives you a little reward which helps with motivation.

PACE YOURSELF

Work in short chunks of time. No more than 30 minutes at a time. Give yourself 5-10 minute rest breaks before you get too tired.

Don't soldier on. If you feel pain or discomfort during the activity stop and rest.

Can you make an activity easier by doing it in 2 or more parts? For example, soak dishes before you wash them.

Can you spread the activity over the week instead of doing it just once? For example, 3 loads of washing on different days instead of one big load. This is easier to manage and means you'll be active throughout the week instead of just on one day. This is much healthier for you.

Try to alternate the types of movement you do. After you sweep do something else like dusting before you do a similar movement like mopping.

THINK ABOUT HOW YOU'RE MOVING

How does it feel? If a movement feels awkward, stop and think about how you can change what you're doing so you can move safely and easily.

Could you slide objects and equipment along the floor or benchtop instead of lifting them?

Would sitting instead of standing make cooking more enjoyable?

Are you feeling stronger and more able to do tasks? Check in with yourself to see if you can do more. Ask for support to progress to the next level.

Did you know? We never stop the ability to build muscle and get stronger.

ORGANISE YOUR EQUIPMENT

Would you like to organise your cleaning equipment? You can group things that are used together. Place cleaning tools and cloths in an easy to carry basket or bucket.

Keep cleaning equipment in an easy to reach place, preferably no higher than eye level.

VACUUMING

HOW TO MAKE IT EASIER

Use a long-handled, lightweight vacuum cleaner.

Store the vacuum in an easy to reach place.

Reduce the suction level to lessen the drag on thick carpet.

Vacuum one room at a time and only the rooms you use regularly. Take a rest break between rooms.

Avoid doing other activities that have similar movements (such as sweeping or mopping) immediately before or after vacuuming.

Run extension cords along the wall rather than across the room or corridors to avoid tripping.

HOW TO MAKE IT MORE ACTIVE

For clients who are interested in more of a workout and have the ability to be more active.

Walk back and forward with the hose/stick rather than just pushing the hose/stick while standing in one position.

Put on some music you like and sweep your carpets instead of vacuuming.



Pro tip: Work in a straight line. That way, you'll be able to make sure every inch of the floor is covered. Vacuum your carpets in both directions. From front to back and from one side to the other. This agitates the carpet fibers and removes trapped dirt.

SWEEPING AND MOPPING

HOW TO MAKE IT EASIER

Use a lightweight mop and bucket.

Use a mop with an adjustable handle, adjusted to the correct length for your height.

A long-handled pan and broom reduces the need to bend over.

Where possible clear furniture and obstacles before you start.

HOW TO MAKE IT MORE ACTIVE

Walk back and forward with the mop or broom rather than just pushing it while standing in one position. Put some music on that you like, move in time to the music.

Pro tip: Take a look at your broom. Does it have dust or hair clumps stuck to the bottom? Use your vacuum attachment to remove the dust and hair or wash the bristles in a bucket of warm, soapy water. Leave to dry.

DUSTING

HOW TO MAKE IT EASIER

Use a long-handled duster for difficult to reach areas.

Static cloths pick up more dust.

Use a folded towel or kneepads when kneeling.

When rising from kneeling hold onto something stable like a chair.

Keep both feet on the floor at all times.

Don't stand on furniture or ladders. If there are hard to reach places ask a family member or talk to me about organising help.

HOW TO MAKE IT MORE ACTIVE

Use a lightweight, long-handled broom to dust ceilings and cornices and get a nice shoulder workout at the same time. It's important to stand in one place while you're looking up. Don't walk while looking up, you could trip on something. Start slow, pace yourself with rest breaks.

Pro tip: Dust blinds using a lambswool duster. Brush downward. For stains, spray an all-purpose cleaner onto a microfiber cloth and wipe.

CLEANING THE BATHROOM

HOW TO MAKE IT EASIER

Use non-scrub products. They only need a gentle wipe and don't create extra resistance like cream cleaners.

Use long-handled scrubbers to clean the shower or bath. This reduces bending and twisting.

Avoid awkward postures like bending over and reaching.

Wipe down the vanity area daily.

Pro tip: An old toothbrush can be a great cleaning tool. It can be used on hard to get at mold and dirt.

IRONING

HOW TO MAKE IT EASIER

Reduce the amount of ironing you do. Consider if sheets, linen and underwear need to be ironed.

If you hang your clothes well when they're drying, you may find a lot of clothes don't need ironing.

Leave the iron and ironing board set up if you can. If you can't, store them in an easy to reach place.

If you can't leave the ironing board set up consider purchasing a lightweight ironing board. This will be easier to set up and take down.

Adjust the ironing board to the correct height. Your elbow should be level with the top of the iron handle.

Let the iron do the work for you. Set the temperature to the correct heat for the fabric and use less pressure.

MAKING THE BED

HOW TO MAKE IT EASIER

Very low beds can be raised to make is easier to change sheets. Is there someone who can raise your bed for you?

If your bed is not on wheels, moving it out from the wall permanently will help with changing sheets.

Fitted sheets are easier.

Cotton cellular blankets and doonas are lighter than woolen blankets and easier to change.

Try to avoid lifting the mattress to tuck sheets in.

Use the bed as support when you stand after kneeling.

Put a chair at the end of your bed so you can strip blankets off the bed onto the chair.

Pro tip: A great way to clean your mattress is to run the vacuum over it. Try to do this every 3 months.

WASHING CLOTHES

HOW TO MAKE IT EASIER

Small loads several times a week are easier to manage than a big load once a week. Activities spread over the week are more beneficial for you than doing the activity once a week.

Use a long-handled reacher or long-handled tongs to remove items from the washing machine.

Use the gentle cycle for items that need hand washing. A lingerie bag can help protect your delicates.



DRYING CLOTHES

HOW TO MAKE IT EASIER

If you aren't able to walk to the clothesline at the moment, a clothes rack inside is easier to manage.

The clothesline is easier to use at your chest height or waist level. Can a family member organise a sturdy platform for you to stand on or can they lower the line? Do you need help from us to do this?

Use a trolley to wheel your washing to the line.

Carry small loads to the line. A plastic bucket may be more helpful than a basket. A bucket leaves one hand to open a door or hold a rail.

Wedge the door open to make it easier to get through.

Place a chair or table near the clothesline to put the washing basket or bucket on.

If you have trouble with pegs use coat hangers to hang your washing on the line. Clothes hung this way also need less ironing.

Fold clothes as you remove them from the line to reduce ironing.

HOW TO MAKE IT MORE ACTIVE

If your clothesline is shoulder height or higher, hang your washing and get a super workout for your arms and shoulders. Take rest breaks when you need them.

COOKING AND MEAL PREPARATION

HOW TO MAKE IT EASIER

Make sure you have good lighting over benchtops and other work areas.

Good ventilation can reduce your glasses fogging.

Are your floors slip resistant?

Collect all the items before you start.

If standing is difficult sit at a table or bench to prepare the meal.

A kitchen trolley is handy for getting food to and from the fridge.

A separate kitchen trolley is helpful for storing pots, pans and other cooking supplies. This will make it easy to keep everything you need within reach.

Consider doing the activity in stages. For example, prepare meat in the morning, veggies in the afternoon.

Buy pre-cut meat (mince or diced steak) or pre-cut veggies (fresh or frozen).

Use spiked or stable boards with pegs or edges, or use non-slip mats to stabilise your work area.

Use utensils with easy to grip enlarged handles – jar openers, cap or can openers, knives and peelers, kettle pourer.

HOW TO MAKE IT MORE ACTIVE

Stand to prepare your meals.

Use old fashioned kitchen equipment instead of modern electric equipment. Chop your veggies instead of using a food processor. This will help your hands be flexible and strong.

Try carrying food to and from the fridge instead of using a trolley.

Put things you use a lot in places where you have to stretch a little to reach them or bend or squat a little. Use your kitchen to make you stronger!

WASHING DISHES

HOW TO MAKE IT EASIER

Try wiping food off dishes before soaking or washing them.

Wash or soak dishes immediately after use.

Soak dishes for a few hours before washing.



HOW TO MAKE IT EASIER

Try kneeling on a folded towel when you're gardening. Or buy an inexpensive kneeling pad from the hardware store.

Consider getting some special tools designed to make gardening easier. For example:

- Easy Grip and long-handled gardening tools.
- Ratchet Secateurs. They need less strength to operate.
- A lightweight garden hose.

Raised garden beds are easier to work with. Wide enough for you to reach everything easily.

Herbs, veggies and flowers grown in pots or planters are easier to manage than beds.

Growing a few herbs is great because they're pretty easy and give you the opportunity to enjoy being outside.

Vary the type of activity you're doing. This will make it easier on your body. Don't weed in one position for 30 minutes. Weed for 10 minutes, clear leaves for 10 minutes, weed for 10 minutes, have a rest.

Taking small loads of rubbish to your council bin regularly is also a great way to add more movement to your day plus makes managing your rubbish easier.

Give yourself activities you enjoy that get you outside every day. Walk to the mail box, sweep the path, water your garden, pick some flowers, check the sky for weather, breath and relax.

HOW TO MAKE IT MORE ACTIVE

Can you keep your council bins in an easy to reach place and put them out every week?

Put your herbs in a sunny spot as far from your door as you can. You've just added more walking and outdoor time to your day.

Did you know? If you spend 2-10 minutes outside within 2 hours of waking, you'll set your body clock and make it easier to sleep at night. Don't wear sunglasses while you do this but never look into any light that hurts your eyes.



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