We hope you find this leaflet informative but if you require further information please use the contacts below;

British Lung Foundation
73-75 Goswell Road
London EC1V 7ER
020 7688 5555
www.britishlungfoundation.com/copd.asp

Websites
www.livingwithcopd.co.uk
www.lunguk.org/copd.asp
www.brit-thoracic.org.uk/copd
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Respiratory Nurse at Darent Valley Hospital
01322 428100 bleep 556/507

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This leaflet has been designed to tell you about the role of the Occupational Therapist (OT) and provide you with some useful tips about how you can manage your condition.

**What is the role of the OT?**
The OT will look at how you carry out your everyday tasks and may advise you on different methods of achieving these in order to conserve your energy and prevent breathlessness.

They will work with you to achieve the things you want to do.

- Getting washed and dressed
- Getting up from a chair/in/out of bed
- Walking
- Preparing a meal
- Shopping/Household tasks
- Climbing the stairs
- Hobbies and relaxation techniques

**Breathing and relaxation:**
Try to achieve a slow, steady breathing pattern. The top part of your chest should stay fairly still and your stomach should slowly rise, as you breathe in and fall as you breathe out.

**Pursed Lip Breathing**
Breathe in slowly through your nose, pucker your lips, and slowly breathe out, making a soft hissing sound.

Every time you breathe in and out, imagine you are relaxing more and releasing tension from your muscles.

**Diet and exercise:**
Diet and exercise are extremely important, as a healthy body can help to fight infections and prevent illness.

Try to eat a well balanced diet with plenty of fresh fruit, vegetables and water. Take regular exercise but do not overdo it!
Household tasks and shopping:
- Spread out cleaning of the house over a few days i.e. one room per day
- Wet wipe instead of dusting to minimise dust particles in the air which can aggravate your breathing. Use a helping hand to reach high areas
- Sit down to iron – ask your OT about perching stools
- Allow dishes to drain rather than wiping dry
- Limit the amount of hoovering needed
- There are services available to help with shopping and household tasks. Ask the OT for information
- Some local shops will deliver shopping or you could order it via the internet

How can the OT help me with COPD?
The OT can provide advice on energy conservation, equipment or adaptations to your home or work environment.

Before you start an activity
- Relax
- Allow for breaks
- Pace yourself
- Spread tasks out

You could keep a diary to help you understand the times of day when you are most tired or breathless and use this to plan your activities.
Personal care:
- Bath or shower in the part of the day when you have the most energy
- If you like showers, but feel they make you get out of breath, try a cooler water temperature
- If you have problems drying off after bathing, you may find it helps to put on a towelling dressing gown and sit down to slowly dry yourself
- Alternatively have a strip-wash whilst sitting down

Dressing and grooming:
- Before starting, gather all clothing together
- Loose fitting clothes are easier to put on and take off and do not restrict breathing
- Sit down to get dressed and dress lower body first
- Minimise bending by using a step stool to rest your foot on, when putting on socks and shoes
- Wear slip on shoes or use a shoe-horn
- Sit down whilst brushing teeth/ hair etc
- Avoid aerosols/strong scents/ talc

Mobility and transfers:
- Plan ahead to limit the amount of unnecessary walking you need to do
- Use any walking aids provided by the Physiotherapist
- If you have difficulty getting on or off the bed, a chair or the toilet, inform the OT who can provide advice or aids to assist

Preparing meal / drink:
- Sit down for tasks, such as: peeling vegetables or waiting for a kettle to boil
- Ensure all objects / utensils are within easy reach
- Spread preparation of meals throughout the day
- Use a kitchen trolley to carry objects
- If preparing meals becomes too much, ask the OT about meals on wheels or a frozen food service