



Living well at home

Living fully and safely in your chosen home is important. There are many steps that you or a friend/family member can do to help you to remain independent. If your needs are complex, or you're unsure how to manage your situation, you might benefit from the support of an occupational therapist.

Top tips from occupational therapists

Take care of yourself

- **Eat and drink healthily** with plenty of fruit, vegetables and water. Even if you are not hungry, have a little - it will help boost your immune system and energy levels.
- **Sleep** is important, but if you are struggling, try avoiding tea and coffee, taking a bath, using blackout curtains, listening to gentle music or deep breathing exercises.
- **Keep mobile** by moving every 20 minutes - it's good for the muscles and joints. A timer or a timer app might help to prompt you.
- **Keep doing what you enjoy.** Living is more than the everyday tasks we have to do.

Manage your activities

- **Plan ahead.** Break your tasks into small steps and give yourself plenty of time to get to where you need to be and complete your tasks.
- **Pace yourself** and take regular breaks. If you experience fatigue, breathlessness or chronic pain, spread your activities throughout the day or week.
- **Use technology.** Try shopping online or using apps that help manage your health or environment, and social media to keep in touch with friends and family.

Manage in your home

- **Organise your home** so you have everything you need within easy reach to reduce the demands on your body.
- **Stay warm in winter.** Have a look at advice from the Energy Saving Trust on how to reduce bills and make your home more energy efficient.
- **Make your home safer** by decluttering, removing loose rugs, installing banisters and grab rails, and having good lighting.
- **Make adaptations** to reduce effort and risk. Rearranging furniture, changing the height of your chair or bed and installing bath aids could all help.

Ask for support

- **Find out what is available** in your area. There might be a group, class or centre that will suit you.
- **Talk with family and friends** to help them understand how you feel and how they can support you.
- **Try not to isolate yourself at home.** If you find it difficult to get out, invite others to visit you.

Occupational therapy

helping people to live, not exist



Occupational therapists provide practical support to help you do the activities that matter to you. They will consider all of your needs – physical, psychological, social and environmental. Their support can make a real difference giving a renewed sense of purpose, opening up new horizons, and changing the way you feel about the future.

Support from an occupational therapist

An occupational therapist will consider your strengths, abilities and health care needs. They will find out what you want and need to be able to do and then consider if your environment (home, workplace, school, etc.) supports or hinders your ability to do those things. They can then find ways to make life easier and support you to manage daily tasks and activities. This might include support with self-care, household chores, getting out and about, adaptations to your home, finding or staying in work or education, or taking part in social and leisure activities.

Arranging to see an occupational therapist

Speak with your GP or a health and social care professional - they might be able to arrange for you to see an occupational therapist. Before you speak with anyone, you might find it helpful to spend some time writing down the things you're worried about or struggle with; it will help you feel more prepared.

If you see an occupational therapist on the NHS, or through education or social services, you will not have to pay. Alternatively, you could consider contacting a local independent occupational therapist who works outside the NHS and social care services. You will need to pay for their services. You, or a friend or carer, can find contact details of independent occupational therapists online at www.rcotss-ip.org.uk/find.

Occupation matters

rcot.co.uk

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