

Senior Sense



Vol. XVI No.2

Your Resources

WATER Saving Tips

Periods of drought remind all of us that water is a limited resource. Every day hundreds of gallons are wasted through leaks and careless use. Reducing water use is everyone's responsibility. Here are five ways you can reduce your water consumption and save energy and money at the same time! Just think "WATER."

Wash full loads of laundry and dishes. An older top-loading machine can use 41 gallons of water per load of laundry. If you are doing a small load of laundry, adjust the water setting to a lower level. Maybe it is time to replace your old washing machine with a new Energy Star rated model. New machines use 35 to 50 percent less water, plus 50 percent less energy per load. You will save money on both your water and energy bills. If you don't have enough dishes to fill the dishwasher, consider filling a dishpan or the sink and washing the dishes by hand. Rinse the dishes in a pan of water.

Always turn off running water. One of the easiest ways to reduce your water use is to turn the water off while you are brushing your teeth or shaving. Make it a habit to collect water in a bucket as you wait for it to reach the correct temperature. You can use it around the house for cleaning and watering houseplants. Instead of running the water every time you get a drink, keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator.

Take shorter showers. Did you know that a ten minute shower can use up to 80 gallons of water? It's easy to lower your water use by shortening your shower time to five minutes. Another option is to install a toggle switch on the shower that cuts the water flow while maintaining a consistent temperature so you can wet down then turn the water off to lather up. If you prefer a bath instead of a shower, lower the water level in the tub to about five inches. This will reduce your water use dramatically since a full bathtub can use over 50 gallons of water.

Eliminate any and all leaks. One dripping faucet leaking at a rate of one drop of water per second quickly adds up

to nearly nine gallons of water a day running down the drain. When you see a leaky faucet or toilet, fix it immediately. To check the toilet for leaks, remove the cover from the toilet tank and add five to ten drops of food coloring. Wait 30 minutes. If any of the coloring leaks into the toilet bowl then you have a leak and should get it fixed.

Reduce the flow of your toilet and showerhead. Nearly half of all the water used in your home is for toilets and showers. A toilet manufactured before 1993 uses 3.5 to 8 gallons of water each time it is flushed. It is a good idea to replace your toilet with a new high efficiency model. They work better than the original low-flow models and use just 1.5 gallons of water per flush or less. If you aren't ready to replace your toilet, then reduce the water flow by displacing some of the water in the tank. Place a plastic bottle filled with pebbles or sand in the back of the tank and you can save about a half gallon per flush. Another way to reduce the flow is by not using the toilet as a trashcan. Most showerheads use 2.5 gallons of water per minute (gpm). It is relatively inexpensive to reduce the flow of showerhead by installing a low-flow model that uses only 1.5 to 2 gpm.

It only takes a few changes in your habits to start conserving water. For more information on how you can conserve water, contact your local county extension office.

Remember, every drop counts.

Your Relationships

Working Caregivers: Finding Your Balance

You have an important deadline at work and the paid caregiver has not come on time. Your supervisor has asked why you were late to work again. Your mother needs full-time care, but you can't afford to take time off. You struggle to balance the demands of family, work, and your senior everyday. If you care for an older

family member, this story sounds familiar.

In fact, juggling caregiving and work-related

responsibilities has become a

way of life for many caregivers. Almost two out of three caregivers work either full- or part-time while providing care. Employed caregivers face the challenge of how to balance their time and energy between work and caregiving. Many employed caregivers lose time from work, come in late, leave early, take unscheduled time off, or lose income and benefits. Some employed caregivers lose pension credits or retirement income because they change to part-time work, take early retirement, or simply quit their jobs. Some caregivers who enjoy their jobs and who are friends with their coworkers may become depressed and lonely after changing or quitting their jobs.

Here are some tips for finding your balance between caregiving and work responsibilities.

Nearly half of all the water used in your home is for toilets and showers.

- **Set priorities.** Decide what is most important, least important and in-between. You may need to say “no” even if it might disappoint others. Set priorities for your own needs, family needs, job needs, and your senior’s needs. Priorities will change from day to day and from week to week, but a ranked list will help you maintain priorities.
- **Schedule separate time for your senior and the rest of your family.** Help everyone understand which time is “theirs.” For seniors living out of town, you might spend a week or weekend every month with them, depending on their condition and your schedule.
- **Schedule a telephone time at work.** This might be during lunch, when the senior, family members or doctors may call you.
- **Rearrange commitments creatively.** Schedule appointments and errands to make the most of your time. Can you find a drug store close to your work, or a grocery that stays open late?
- **Invest time or money in things that will help you manage tasks.** Consider using a computer, bookkeeper, housekeeper or community resources.
- **Arrange with your employer to make up time away from the office.** Try to set up a flexible schedule if your caregiving demands seem overwhelming. Can you do

Set aside time on a regular basis to be alone, take a walk, exercise, or just have quiet time. You will be more productive, have more energy and know yourself better.

work such as computer tasks from home?

- **Meet with other caregivers and self-help groups for support.** Sharing can ease tension, give you a new view of your situation, increase understanding and build support. Support groups help you feel less alone. They give you a chance to share what you have learned, and to learn from others in similar situations.
- **Accept your limitations.** Get help from another family member, a neighbor or community services when you need to take a break. What will you give up that will make life easier for you? Perhaps it is membership in a club that doesn’t interest you anymore or a committee that you have served on for a long time.
- **Make time for yourself.** Set aside time on a regular basis to be alone, take a walk, exercise, or just have quiet time. You will be more productive, have more energy and know yourself better. Your care receiver will also benefit when you take time to renew yourself. Take time to be with friends and to do things that you enjoy. This will help you be a more relaxed caregiver and help prevent exhaustion and burnout.

- **Keep good records.** Caregiving requires the use of many services. Working with service providers, insurance companies and others is often confusing and time-consuming. Keep track of contacts and information. Avoid relying only on your memory. Make notes as you talk in person or over the phone. Keep brochures and other information provided by organizations and agencies. Keep copies of letters you write regarding services and those you receive. Ask lots of questions. Clip and file articles about services you may need.

Time is one of caregivers' most precious resources. When you feel trapped between caregiving and career responsibilities, your effectiveness will suffer in both places. Don't become a victim of this stress – take charge by making the tough decisions that can preserve your ability to survive.

Adapted from Maine Cooperative Extension, Florida IFAS Extension, AARP and the US Dept of Health & Human Services.

- Aerobic – that increases heart rate and uses the large muscles of the body;
- Strength Training – that increases muscle size and strength; and
- Stretching - that keeps the body flexible.

Most people know a lot about aerobic exercise and many older adults do it regularly. Favorite aerobic activities are

walking, swimming, biking and dancing. The U.S. Dietary

Strength training is probably the most important exercise for keeping you independent.

Guidelines suggest that we do at least 5 or more days of aerobic activity a week for at least 30 minutes a day.

But you may know less about strength training and stretching. For the next few issues of *Senior Sense*, we will focus on strength training. This information will be based on a publication called *Growing Stronger: Strength Training for Older Adults* available on-line at http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/growing_stronger/print_friendly_pdf.htm

Strength training is probably the most important exercise for keeping you independent. Because it maintains or increases muscle mass, you are less likely to fall and will have more stamina and strength for chores like carrying grocery bags or playing with grandchildren.

Strength training helps you to look trimmer even if you don't lose weight. Muscle weighs more than fat, but it looks firmer. You will love your new appearance because you will have better posture and your clothes will fit better. But don't be

Your Health

Growing Stronger Program

To be truly fit at any age, one must do three types of activity:

surprised if you drop some pounds. Muscle burns more calories than the same amount of fat so you may lose weight if you don't overeat. Strength training can be really helpful if you don't want to gain weight after you quit smoking.

Strength training benefits you in many ways. It can –

- Reduce arthritis pain by increasing muscle strength around the joints;
- Improve blood glucose by helping the body use insulin better;
- Slow bone loss;
- Improve your balance to reduce your chances of falling;
- Lower your cholesterol and triglyceride levels;
- Relieve back pain; and
- Improve mental and emotional health (just as well as an anti-depressant in mild cases)

Many older adults enjoy strength training more than aerobic exercise because they do it only 2-3 times a week and they see the benefits very quickly. If you increase the weight gradually over a few weeks, you may have more energy and sleep better. Some people also like doing it with family or friends either at home or at a gym.

If strength training is so great, why not do it more often? Strength training works because it tears down some of the working muscle while you train. On the days you do not lift weights, your muscles repair themselves and get stronger. If you train the same muscles everyday, your muscles

will never have a chance to get stronger. Some people do train more often, but they do not train the same muscle groups two days in a row. For example, they may do exercises for the upper body one day and the lower body on the next.

In the next issue of *Senior Sense*, we will talk about steps to getting started safely.

Fruity Breakfast Slush

4 cups cranberry drink
2 cups frozen unsweetened strawberries
2 medium size bananas

1. Wash hands and assemble clean equipment.
2. On low speed in a blender blend half of all ingredients until mixture is smooth and frothy. Pour into pitcher. Repeat with remaining ingredients. Stir before serving. Serve immediately. Best served in a frosty glass!

Makes 6 servings.

Nutrient Analysis, per serving:

Calories	150
Carbohydrate	38 grams
Protein	1 gram
Fat	1 gram
Dietary Fiber	2 grams
Cholesterol	0 mg
Sodium	5 mg



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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Colleges of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences & Family and Consumer Sciences

Dear Friend:

SENIOR SENSE is a quarterly publication provided by your local county Cooperative Extension office. It is prepared by Extension Family & Consumer Sciences specialists at The University of Georgia specifically for the educational needs of older Georgians.

Please contact your local Cooperative Extension office for more information on these and related topics.

Learning *for* **Life**

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CHFD-E 87

Senior Sense 2-7

April, 2008

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, The University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.
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