



PANTAI JERUDONG  
SPECIALIST CENTRE

# SELF MANAGEMENT AND REHABILITATION FOR COVID-19 PATIENTS

Name:

Discharge Date:

Hospital where treated:



# WHO IS THIS BOOKLET FOR?

This booklet provides basic information for those who have been unwell and admitted to the hospital for COVID-19. This booklet provides information in the following areas:



Doctor's advice



Exercise after leaving hospital



Managing breathlessness



Managing stress, anxiety and depression



Managing eating, drinking and swallowing



Managing problems with attention, memory and thinking clearly



Managing activities of daily living

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## ***Acknowledgment***

We gratefully acknowledge the hard work and expertise of the World Health Organisation (WHO) who produced the original guidance on which this document is based. This guideline has been subsequently adapted by the Rehabilitation Department, Pantai Jerudong Specialist Centre for use in the setting of Negara Brunei Darussalam for those who have been directly affected by COVID-19 and in assisting them or others around them to regain normal functionality.



## DOCTOR'S ADVICE

COVID-19 stands for "coronavirus disease 2019." It is caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2. The virus first appeared in late 2019 and quickly spread around the world. There are now multiple variants of this virus.

People with COVID-19 can have fever, cough, trouble breathing (when the virus infects the lungs), and other symptoms.

For most people who get COVID-19, symptoms get better within a few weeks. But for some people, especially those who got sick enough to need to go to the hospital, continue to have symptoms for longer. These can be mild or more serious.

Doctors are still learning about COVID-19. But they generally describe 3 stages of illness and recovery:

1) Acute COVID-19 – This refers to symptoms lasting up to 4 weeks after a person is infected. Most people with mild COVID-19 do not have symptoms beyond this stage, but some do.

2) Ongoing symptomatic COVID-19 – This refers to symptoms that continue for 4 to 12 weeks after being infected. People who get severely ill during the acute stage are more likely to have ongoing symptoms.

3) Post-COVID-19 – This refers to symptoms that continue beyond 12 weeks after being infected. This is more common in people who are critically ill, meaning they need to stay in the intensive care unit ("ICU"), be put on a ventilator (breathing machine), or have other types of breathing support.

Different terms have been used when people have persistent symptoms, meaning symptoms that last longer than a few months. These include "long-COVID," "chronic COVID-19," and "post-COVID syndrome."

What symptoms are most likely to persist?

This is not the same for everyone. But symptoms that are more likely to last beyond a few weeks include:

- Feeling very tired (fatigue)
- Trouble breathing
- Chest discomfort
- Cough

Other physical symptoms can also continue beyond a few weeks. These include problems with sense of smell or taste, headache, runny nose, joint or muscle pain, trouble sleeping or eating, sweating, and diarrhea.

Some people have ongoing psychological symptoms, too. These might include:

- Trouble thinking clearly, focusing, or remembering
- Depression, anxiety, or a related condition called post-traumatic stress disorder ("PTSD")

After you have been ill, especially for a long time, it is normal to take a while to feel like yourself again. How long this takes can vary from person to person. Your recovery will depend on your age, your overall health, and how severe your COVID-19 symptoms are. Some symptoms, like fatigue, might continue even while others improve or go away. This booklet will address some of the common problems that people may experience and provide advice on how to deal with them.



# EXERCISE AFTER LEAVING HOSPITAL

Engaging in physical activity at home is an essential part of recovery after severe COVID-19 illness. The benefits of doing regular exercises are as followed:

- Improve strength and function
- Improve balance and coordination
- Manage fatigue
- Reduce breathlessness
- Improve mood and reduce stress

## Safety Considerations.

- Begin the exercise when you have no fever
- Do the movements within the pain limit

Ask your family member / carer to supervise while you are doing the exercises if you:

- Have history of falls in the past 2 months
  - Use a walking frame or stick for walking
  - Difficulty walking in the ward or upon discharge
  - Have other health condition or previous injury
- **STOP** the exercises if you are experiencing the following:
    - Severe shortness of breath
    - Chest pain
    - Sharp pain on your joints, or muscles
    - Exhaustion
    - Rapid increase of heart rate (palpitations)
    - Dizziness or lightheadedness

Being quarantined might have limited your activities that keep you from actively moving. It is important to stay active throughout the day. A few examples of how you can keep active:

- Have your meals on the chair or by sitting on the edge of a bed
- Walk around your bed space, to your kitchen, or in your home
- Stand up from long hours of sitting
- Take part in a simple exercise routine

Here is a list of simple exercises you can easily do at home daily:

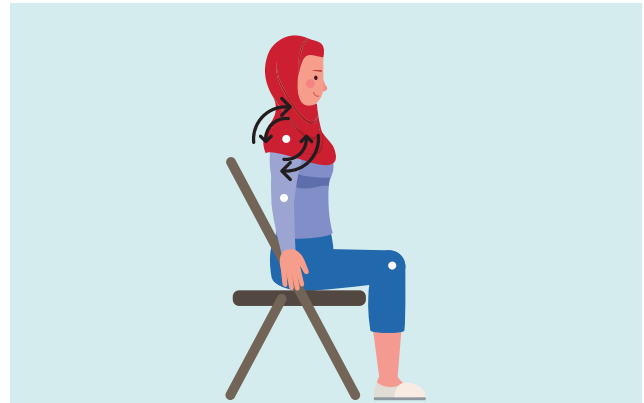
Equipment needed: 2 x weights (600ml bottled water, or 0.5kg dumbbells), ankle weights (optional) & a chair.

- Warm Up; Repeat each movement 8 times each side / each direction.



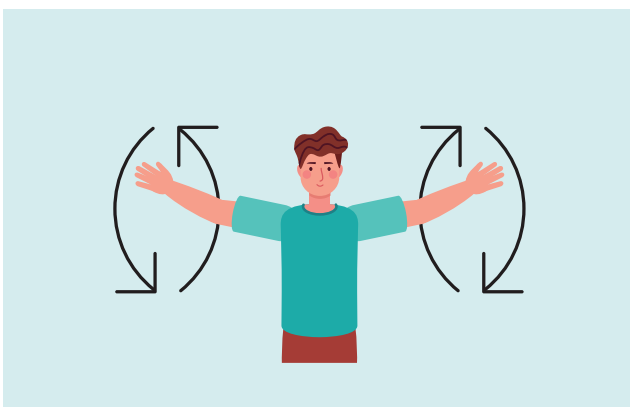
### Head Roll

Start by gently tilting your head to the right side, and rolling your head forward. Repeat the movement to the opposite direction.



### Shoulder Roll

Roll your shoulder forward by shrugging your shoulder up, forward, down, then backwards. Repeat the movement backwards.



### Huge Arm Circles

Keeping your arms straight, and draw large circles with your arms.



### Trunk Rotation

With arms crossed, rotate your trunk from one side to the other.



### Ankle Circles

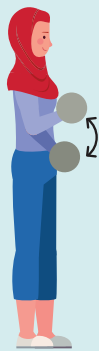
Draw circles with your foot and toes.



### High March

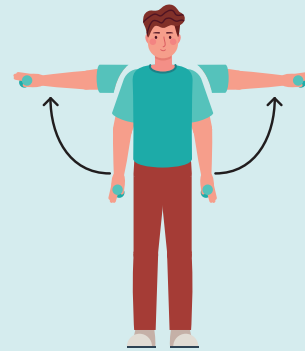
Bring your knee as high as you can and alternate.

- Strengthening exercises; aim to complete **3 sets** of **10 repetitions** for each exercise. Have **30 seconds rest** after completing **1 set**. *If the exercise is too hard - reduce the weight, or the number of repetitions.*



### Bicep Curl with Weights

Holding a bottled water or a dumbbell in your hand. Bend your elbow and straighten your arm back down.



### Arm Raise Sideways with Weights

Hold the bottled water or dumbbell in both hands. Lift both arms sideways to shoulder level, and back down.



### Seated Knee Extension

In sitting position, straighten one leg and slowly lower down.



### Sit-to-Stand

Keep your arms crossed over your chest. Stand up and sit back down slowly.



### Heel Raises

Go on your toes and back down.



### Leg Raise Sideways

Keeping your body straight, lift your leg to the side.

- Cool down;
- Muscle stretches; hold each movement for 20 seconds, repeat for 5 times.



### Trunk Side Stretch

Reach your arm over and bend your trunk/body sideways.



### Shoulder Stretch

Bring one arm across, and use the other hand to push into your chest until you feel the stretch on your shoulder.





### **Quadriceps (front of thigh)**

In standing with support, bend one leg behind you and grab your ankle. Pull your ankle towards your bottom until you feel the stretch on your front thigh.



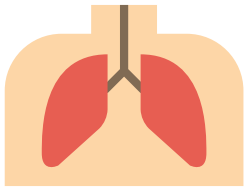
### **Hamstring (back of thigh)**

In sitting, bend one leg and keep the other leg straight on your heel. Slowly bend your body forward, keeping your back straight until you feel the stretch on the back of your thigh.

### Disclaimer:

- It is normal to feel slight breathlessness when doing the exercises
- The list of exercises above is only a general guideline. Consequences of these exercises are not guaranteed if you choose to rely upon this exercise content as your sole source of information about COVID-19 and its rehabilitation.

If you have any concerns doing any of the exercises, please contact your doctor or Physiotherapy experts in the field.

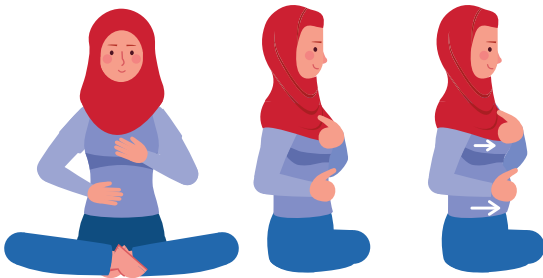


# MANAGING BREATHLESSNESS

It is fairly common to experience breathlessness after getting COVID-19 and let alone, being stuck in a hospital for a period of time. Becoming breathless easily can make you feel anxious and make your breathlessness worse. It is important to stay calm and the best way to manage it is through simple breathing exercises techniques.

## Breathing Techniques

### *Controlled Breathing*



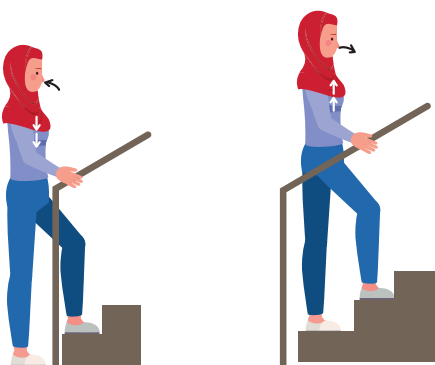
This technique will help you relax and control your breathing.

- Sit in a comfortable and supported position.
- Place one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach.
- Close your eyes if this would help you relax.
- Slowly, breathe in through your nose (or mouth) and focus on your breathing.
- You should notice that your chest and belly will start to rise.
- Slowly, breathe out through your nose (or mouth).
- Try to use as little as little effort as possible and make your breaths slow, relaxed and smooth.

### *Paced Breathing*

This is useful to practise when carrying out activities that require more effort or make you breathless. E.g. climbing up the stairs, walking up a hill, light exercises, lifting heavy.

- Think about breaking the activities down into smaller and manageable steps so it is easier to perform without getting too tired or breathless .
- Breathe in before you start your activity (e.g.: before climbing up a step).
- Breathe out as you are performing your activity (e.g.: climbing up a step).



## Positions to Ease Breathlessness

These are some positions that may help reduce your breathlessness. Try each of them and see which ones help you.

### High Side Lying

Lie on your side propped up by pillows, supporting your head and neck, with your knees slightly bent.



### Standing With Back Support

Lean with your back against a wall and with your hands by your side. Ensure that your feet are about a foot away from the wall and slightly apart.



### Forward Lean (Sitting with table)

Sitting on a chair with a table in front, lean forwards from the waist with your head and neck resting on the table. You may place a pillow on the table.



### Forward Lean (Sitting)

Sitting on a chair, lean forwards from the waist, resting your arms on your lap.



### Forward Lean (Standing)

While standing, hold on to a stable surface (wall, windowsill or a chair), then lean forwards.

## Deep Breathing Exercises

To encourage deep breathing at rest and during any activity, you may perform the breathing exercises in these positions at home. Try each of the exercises and see which ones you find helpful. It is advisable to start with the position that you find most comfortable.

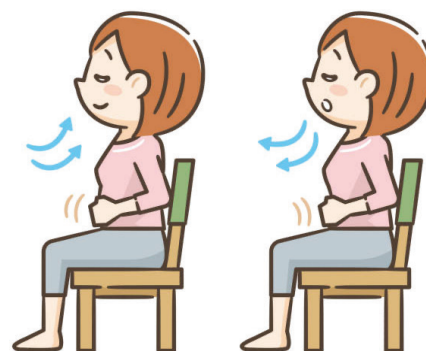
### 1. Lying on your back

Lie on your back with your knees bent. Place both your hands on your stomach.



### 2. In sitting

Sit upright in a comfortable chair with your hands on your stomach.



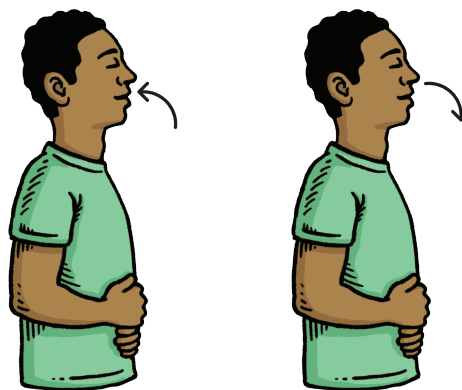
### 3. Lying on your stomach

Place hands on either sides of the body/above the head.



### 4. Standing

Standing upright placing both hands on the stomach.



### Instructions:

- Breathe in through the nose, taking long, slow deep breaths in.
- You should slowly notice that your belly will start to rise.
- Hold at the end of each deep breath in for 2-3 seconds (as tolerated).
- Breathe out gently through the nose or mouth as if you are sighing.
- Try to keep shoulders and chest relaxed at all times.

Repeat exercises for 1 minute as tolerated.



# MANAGING STRESS, ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Being unwell or being in a hospital can be a highly stressful experience which will have an impact on your mood. It is normal to experience feelings of stress, anxiety or depression. Your mood may be affected by the frustrations of not being able to return to your daily routine.

These difficult feelings can affect your ability to engage in daily life, making you feel less motivated and doubtful. Managing stress and feelings of anxiety and depression are an important part of recovery and it is important to be able to identify and to be self-aware of your emotions.

## Coping Techniques

### **Deal with problems in a structured way.**

- Take some time to identify what you feel are problems. What are the concerns that are causing you stress or anxiety?
- Break each problem down into smaller parts so you do not feel overwhelmed.
- Brainstorm some options that can help address the problem.
- Identify pros and cons of each option.
- Narrow down the best option you have.
- Put the solution into practise and see how it goes. Did it solve the problem or was it helpful? Do you need to adjust the solution or consider a different one?
- Ask others for help and seek their feedback regarding the solutions you came up with.
- Consider writing your thoughts down.

## Challenging worrying & anxious thoughts.

High levels of anxiety and stress are usually fueled by the way we think. For example, thoughts such as “There is nothing I can do” or “I won’t be able to cope” are thoughts so strong that you believe them to be true. Having these strong negative thoughts and feelings can change the way you behave. For example, you may withdraw from other people which can feed in to more negative thoughts.

### Catch your thoughts

Start with catching your thoughts and write down what you’re thinking.



### Identify and challenge your thoughts

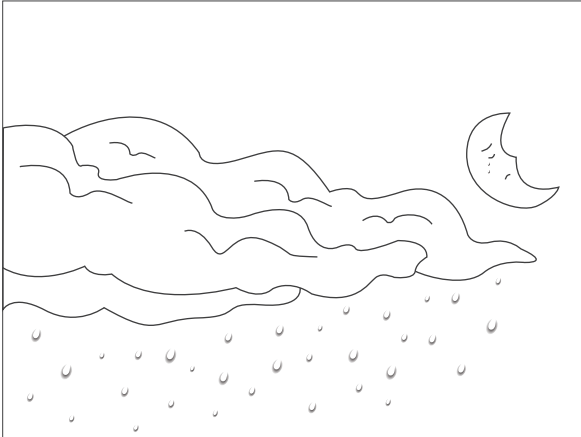


- If you find it difficult to let go of worrying, ask yourself, “What does worrying do for me? Is it helping me solve a problem or keeping me stuck & feeling anxious?”
- Ask yourself how helpful it is to keep thinking this way.
- After working through these approaches, see if you can come up with a more balanced thought.

## Identifying feelings and emotions.

### SADNESS

Depressed, Hopelessness, Lonely, Emptiness



#### Signs & Behaviour

*Crying, Inactivity, Neglect Self-Care, Fatigue, Sleep Problems, Isolation.*

### HAPPY

Cheerful, Satisfied, Pleased, Glad

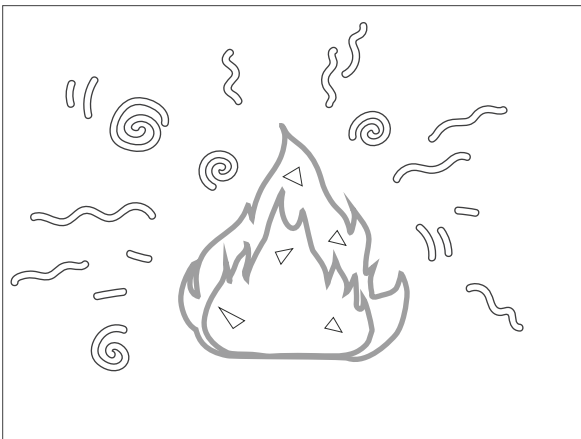


#### Signs & Behaviour

*Laughing, Smiling, Engaging in Self-Care, Increased in Energy & Motivation.*

### ANGER

Irritated, Annoyed and Frustrated

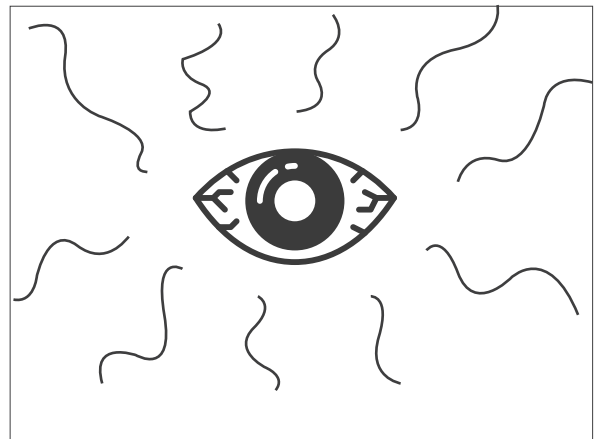


#### Signs & Behaviour

*Feeling hot, Aggression, Arguing, Raising Voice, Increased Heart Rate, Blaming*

### JEALOUSY

Bitter, Envious, Contempt, Spiteful



#### Signs & Behaviour

*Distrust, Controlling, Frustration, Negative Thinking, Acting Possessive, Feelings of Inadequacy.*

### LOVE

Affection, Compassion, Attachment, Closeness

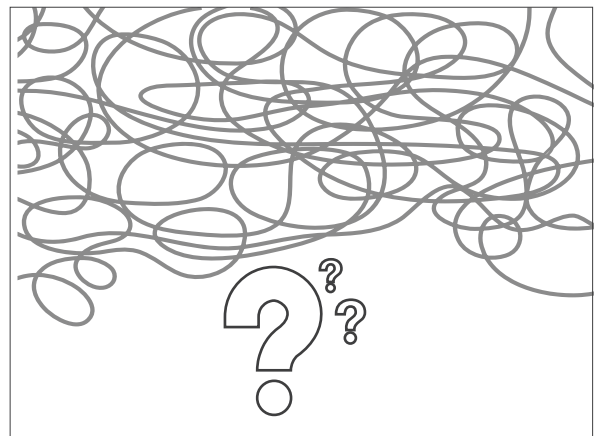


#### Signs & Behaviour

*Kindness, Empathy, Commitment, Desire for Connection, Caring for Another Person.*

### ANXIETY

Fear, Nervous, Stress, Worry



#### Signs & Behaviour

*Rumination, Headache, Crying, Avoidance, Trembling, Shortness of Breath, Racing Heart & Thoughts.*

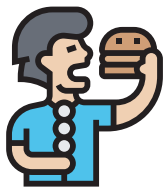
## Self Care

Apply the 6Cs for taking care of our emotional well-being:

### “Ways to provide self-care during COVID-19 Pandemic with 6Cs.”

1. **CAUTION:** Limit excessive and continuous exposure to media, be informed without being overwhelmed. Set time limits or boundaries and get your information from trusted media sources. Avoid reading negative content.
2. **COHERE:** Reach out for emotional support by contacting your loved ones. Isolating yourself can be detrimental to your emotional & mental health.
3. **CALM DOWN:** Practise deep breathing by focusing on each breath. Be mindful of your actions and environment as you focus on your breathing.
4. **CONTROL:** Focus on things that we can control such as hand washing, staying hydrated and ensure you eat well and healthy.
5. **COPING:** Acknowledge the feelings of fear and anxiety. Find effective ways to divert your attention by doing activities such as playing games, reading, puzzles, crafts, etc.
6. **CONNECT:** Stay connected to your beliefs, values and practices that guide your life and nourishes your soul (e.g.: Prayers).





# MANAGING EATING, DRINKING & SWALLOWING

Eating, drinking, or swallowing difficulties may be common while recovering.

Practice safe eating and drinking by:

1. Always sit upright when you eat and drink.
2. Stay seated for at least 30 minutes after eating or drinking.
3. Reduce any distractions when you eat or drink.
4. Take your time to eat and drink.
5. Take small sips of drinks or smaller bites to chew easier.
6. Look out for any coughing, choking, or breathing difficulties when eating or drinking .

If eating, drinking, or swallowing continues to be difficult, please seek medical attention.





# MANAGING PROBLEMS WITH ATTENTION, MEMORY AND THINKING CLEARLY

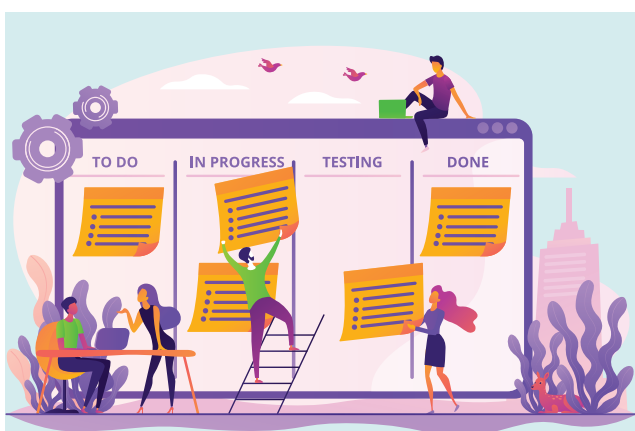
You might not feel like yourself for a period of time – you might feel like you're becoming forgetful, getting distracted often, or you might feel like you can't complete a thought.



1. Seek support from your family members. They know you best, and would know how to support you.



2. Use reminders to prompt yourself, such as sticky notes, to-do lists, keeping a diary, phone reminders – whichever works best for you.



3. Break down major tasks or activities into more manageable sections.



4. Do more puzzles and games, especially those that encourage you to use your memory, your math skills, and train your reaction time.

5. Become more physically active. Simple exercises, such as those listed in this booklet, is a good place to start.



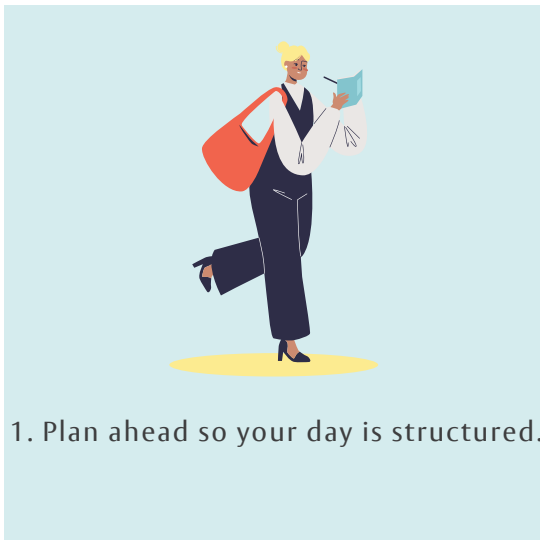


# MANAGING ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING

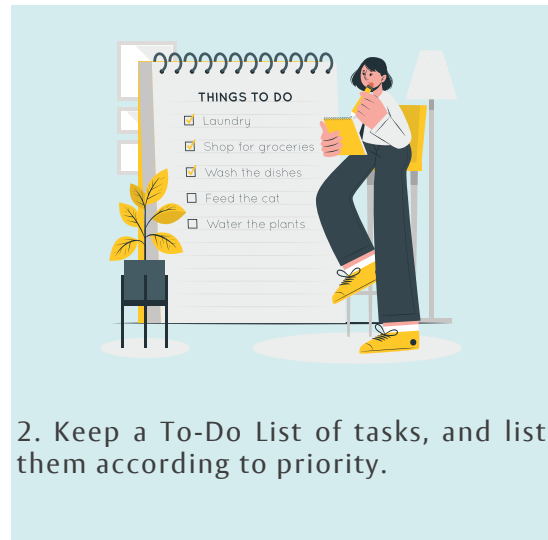
Your activities of daily living encompass activities you do daily that contribute towards your functional ability, health, and well-being. These include taking a shower, cooking a balanced meal, driving, playing with your children and/or grandchildren, driving to school or work, even exercise.

After a period of being unwell, you will need to be mindful about gradually returning to active daily lifestyle.

The following strategies may guide you back to your activities of daily living:



1. Plan ahead so your day is structured.



2. Keep a To-Do List of tasks, and list them according to priority.



3. Give yourself grace and rest regularly.



4. Accept help from others - whether it is for childcare, housework or grocery shopping.



5. Request to be seen by an Occupational Therapist for further guidance on how to manage your Activities of Daily Living, including returning to driving, work, or school.

# About Us

Pantai Jerudong Specialist Centre (PJSC) is a beach front hospital with a breath-taking view of the South China Sea. It consists of three world class centres of excellence namely, The Brunei Cancer Centre (TBCC), Brunei Neuroscience Stroke and Rehabilitation Centre (BNSRC) and Maxillofacial, Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Centre (MFPRSC), that are equipped with state-of-the-art medical and rehabilitative care facilities. With the visionary direction of PJSC's leaders, PJSC's centres of excellence and their services will continue to evolve and to strive towards being 'a leading, innovative and specialised medical centre.'

PJSC's dedicated healthcare team take pride in their personalised approach to provide meaningful care with a difference to our patients and stakeholders. The human and people-centered touch immersed with essential core values are ingrained in every facet of our care for a more holistic 'WE CARE' approach. Additionally, resources are carefully selected and invested in provide comprehensive check-ups, consultations and treating patients with cancer, stroke and other neurological conditions, face, head and neck related conditions with the latest technology, evidence-based treatment, healthy sporting lifestyle advice and outstanding rehabilitative programmes.

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