

LIFE HACKS FOR SPONDIES

To Save Energy, Reduce Pain, and Prevent Flares

Special thanks to Roz Tolliver and Iain McDonald

ACTIVITY	HACK
Picking things up from the floor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a grabber / reacher tool (Costco sells packs of 2) https://www.arthritissupplies.com/ez-reacher-wrist-support.html• Brace with one hand on something sturdy & lift the other leg straight up in the air – keeps back straight• Have a child or pet help you!
Reaching high or low shelves	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a stepstool for reaching above your head• Get yourself somebody tall!• Store rarely used items on top and bottom shelves, and frequently used items where they are most accessible• Get pull-out drawers for low cabinets https://www.homedepot.com/p/Real-Solutions-for-Real-Life-20-625-in-W-x-21-75-in-D-x-16-25-in-H-Double-Tier-Pull-Out-Multi-Use-Basket-Cabinet-Organizer-DBLMUB-20-R-FN/206702641• Adaptive trays that pull up / pull down / rotate (Like a Lazy Susan)• Possible state tax credits /assistance for veterans for adaptive device costs
Sitting at a desk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep a treadmill or elliptical behind desk• Get a standing desk or convertible laptop stand (Like VariDesk: https://www.vari.com/)• Find a comfortable, ergonomic chair (Like a Tempur-Pedic desk chair)• Consider using an exercise ball• Use a foot stool / ottoman to raise your feet• Padded armrests• Use an ergonomic seat cushion (Like Ergo21: https://www.ergo21.com/)• Take breaks and stand / walk around as often as possible• Portable, small lap desk to use in bed or recliner

Cooking/ washing dishes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a special glove with bristles for grabbing things in the sink • Rest one foot on cabinet below sink or low shelf while washing dishes • Have a stool / chair in the kitchen for sitting while chopping / washing dishes • Sit at a table to chop everything, then return to stove / counter to mix / cook with pre-chopped items • Make sure your knives are sharp • Use wide-handled, soft grip cooking utensils tongs, spatulas, etc. • Prep extra vegetables in advance and freeze them for later use • Make large quantities of meals and freeze them • Use a cushioned anti-fatigue floor mat by the stove / sink • Use an immersion hand blender for easier cleanup https://www.amazon.com/Proctor-Silex-59738A-Proctor-Silex-Blender/dp/B00TJTASYG/ref=sr_1_5?crd=T1T0GXHM9G5O&keywords=immersion+hand+blender&qid=1550629600&s=home-garden&prefix=immersion+%2Cgarden%2C211&sr=1-5
Going to bed at night	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take long, hot baths with Epsom salt for aching muscles before bed • Tri-core pillows to support the neck • Use an electric blanket. Turn it on several minutes before you hit the sheets, so the bed is warm • Use a heated mattress pad https://www.amazon.com/Sunbeam-Heated-Mattress-King-MSU1GKS-N000-11A00/dp/B0088AHJZ8/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=heated+mattress+pad&qid=1550629549&refinements=p_n_size_browse-bin%3A362282011&rnid=362278011&s=bedbath&sr=1-1 • If ice helps, use it briefly in problem areas • Elevate knees in bed • Place a lumbar pillow on each side of the waist • Use multiple pillows or a wedge pillow • CBD oil • Take necessary pain meds before bed • Meditation tapes, and maybe some gentle bed yoga • Adjustable bed • Sleep in a recliner
Getting out of bed in the morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use an electric blanket or heated mattress pad. Set it (or set your alarm and do it manually) to turn on an hour before you get up to warm up your joints / muscles

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set an alarm to take any necessary anti-inflammatory medications 30 minutes before getting up, and keep crackers and water nearby to take them with food • Stretch in bed daily before getting up (knees-to-chest, etc.), or in the hot shower • Roll out of bed • Ride a recumbent bike a few minutes after waking • Keep a cane / walker by the bed • Cupping - adds pressure with cups to relieve pain
House cleaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep cleaning products in every bathroom and kitchen • Use a Roomba or Eufy robo-vacuum • Dyson vacuum – lightweight • Long handled scrub brush / electric cleaner • Don't clean entire house in a day. Do one room at a time so as not to overdo it
Opening jars / bottles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use tongs • Use rubber jar / bottle openers for strong grip (Like Oxo brand) • Use mechanical jar openers • Use silicone compression gloves https://www.healthline.com/health/best-arthritis-gloves#thermoskin-arthritic-gloves
Sitting while driving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a U-shaped cushion. I keep one in my office chair and car seat, and I carry one when I travel! https://www.amazon.com/Aylio-Cushion-Tailbone-Sciatica-Washable/dp/B00AE9V3WQ/ref=pd_ybh_a_6?_encoding=UTF8&psc=1&refRID=Y4DEWFF3MJ3QGP GDPS13 • Get a car with a rearview camera, or add a larger clip-on rearview mirror • Always check the seating in a car before buying it • Heated seats / Heated seat pad
2-story living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place all items that have to go upstairs / downstairs in a laundry basket to minimize trips • Install a stair lift, if necessary • Have bedroom downstairs if possible

Removing clothes from dryer / doing laundry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a grabber tool • Wear a back brace / SI joint brace • Keep a folding chair near dryer and sit while waiting • Sit to remove clothes from the dryer • Have washer and dryer on a platform
Standing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring a tripod cane that has a seat • Bring a walker with a seat • Shift weight often • Try MBT rocker-bottom style shoes https://www.thewalkingcompany.com/collections/brand-mbt
Walking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a mobility scooter • Test out shoes (running, walking) at the store • Get orthotics or gel insoles • Really good shoes! (such as rocker-bottom shoes above) • Take frequent breaks • Carry lightweight purse / bag • Just keep walking - consistency is key
Feet stuff!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On Cloud shoes are very light and form to your feet, reduce pain symptoms, great for wide feet • Birkenstocks • Crocs • Cushioned socks (Like Bombas: https://bombas.com/pages/about-us) • Wear splints at night for Achilles tendonitis or plantar fasciitis • Use a long-handled shoehorn or assistive device for putting on socks / shoes • Swing leg up on bed or bench to put on shoes
Recreational activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a standing playing card holder during card games https://www.amazon.com/Playing-Card-Holders-Set-2/dp/B000V7P5FM • Walking outdoors in nature • Cycling

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use an ergonomic aid to insert crayons/pencils for coloring in adult coloring books or for holding paintbrushes https://www.amazon.com/The-Arthwriter-735140000-Hand-Aid/dp/B0002DLBK8/ref=pd_sim_121_14?encoding=UTF8&pd_rd_i=B0002DLBK8&pd_rd_r=95ecbee9-34bb-11e9-8e3f-a56107da1d35&pd_rd_w=htsrY&pd_rd_wg=523yC&pf_rd_p=90485860-83e9-4fd9-b838-b28a9b7fda30&pf_rd_r=69SCH0923A68H1WH8MRV&psc=1&refRID=69SCH0923A68H1WH8MRV • Swimming or water aerobics classes • Yoga, especially chair yoga • Feldenkrais movement classes • Kayaking • Take pain meds before engaging in moderate-to-strenuous activities • Modify, but don't quit, the things you love!
Pain relief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBD oil • Massages • Acupuncture • CBD cream • Neck wrap you can heat in the microwave • Theracane massager (acupressure) • Be out in nature • Music • Mindfulness
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