

## Dealing with Environmental Demands

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

When you are hired for a job, you might not like every aspect of the work environment. However, there are ways to arrange the environment so that you can better tolerate certain demands. Sometimes, minor adjustments can make a big difference in your comfort level.

### Two things to keep in mind:

1. You will need to ask your supervisor for permission before using *some* of these strategies.
2. You might need help from a family member, job coach, or other support person to identify and arrange some of these strategies.

### How can you cope with indoor jobs? Check all of the strategies that you might need to use:

- Wear layers so you can take off your top layer if you get too hot.
- Wear layers so you can put a sweater on if you get too cold.
- Get a small fan to keep your area cool.
- Take scheduled breaks outside to get “fresh air.”

### How can you cope with outdoor jobs? Check all of the strategies that you might need to use:

- Take scheduled breaks indoors or in the shade.
- Wear warm clothing (coat, warm socks, etc...) in cold weather.
- Wear light layers in hot weather.
- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated.
- Wear sunglasses, tinted lenses, or transition lenses.

### How can you cope with noise demands? Check all of the strategies that you might need to use:

- Wear headphones with music.
- Wear ear plugs or soundproof headphones.
- Use a white noise machine or fan to “drown” out sound.
- Take your scheduled breaks in a quiet place.

Hum very quietly.

Ask to work in a quieter location (i.e. if you are in an office setting).

**How can you cope with lighting demands? Check all of the strategies that you might need to use:**

Wear sunglasses, tinted lenses, or transition lenses.

Change light bulb intensity level (if you work in your own area / office).

Take your scheduled breaks in a dim or dark environment.

Close your eyes during scheduled breaks.

**How can you cope with long work shifts? Check all of the strategies that you might need to use:**

Take scheduled breaks doing something you enjoy (i.e. read, text, surf the internet).

Schedule things to look forward to during your day (i.e. a good lunch, a good snack).

Write down your plan for the day or follow a visual schedule.

Check things off your list as you complete tasks.

**How can you cope with seated jobs? Check all of the strategies that you might need to use:**

Complete some of your work standing up.

Take short stretch and walking breaks.

Use a specialized back support or seat cushion.

Politely request a more comfortable chair.

Use an adaptive desk tray.

**How can you cope with standing jobs? Check all of the strategies that you might need to use:**

Politely request a stool or chair for certain jobs (i.e. cashier positions).

Take scheduled breaks sitting down to rest your legs.

Wear supportive, comfortable shoes.

**How can you cope with messy jobs? Check all of the strategies that you might need to use:**

- Wear gloves.
- Wear a hat.
- Wash your hands regularly.
- Use hand sanitizer.
- Have a towel or wet wipes handy.
- Change aprons, scrubs, or shirts if needed.

**How can you cope with smelly jobs? Check all of the strategies that you might need to use:**

- Wear an air mask.
- Use Lysol or some other air spray.
- Take scheduled breaks in the “fresh” air.

**How can you cope with clothing demands? Check all of the strategies that you might need to use:**

- Wear a soft shirt underneath required clothing.
- Wear a seamless shirt underneath required clothing.
- Remove tags from clothing.
- Buy tagless clothing.
- Buy clothes with flat seaming.
- Wear seamless socks.
- Use pants with encased elastic bands.
- Try on several sizes to find the most comfortable for you.

**How can you cope with less structured and unpredictable environments? Check all of the strategies that you might need to use:**

- Use and write in a monthly calendar.

- Use and write in a weekly calendar.
- Use scheduling systems on your cellular phone (Blackberry, iPhone, Palm, etc...).
- Use a Personal Digital Assistant (P.D.A.).
- Use computerized scheduling systems (Outlook or Google calendars).
- Make a checklist of tasks to complete each day.
- Use a picture schedule showing the sequence of tasks.
- Use a left-to- right work system (using folders, bins, shelves, boxes).
- Use specifically labeled trays, folders, shelves to keep your materials in one place and organized.
- Request written instructions to accompany verbal instructions.
- Request written instructions instead of verbal instructions.
- Ask for only one task to complete at a time.
- Use a timer, watch, or liquid timer to know when to start and end tasks.
- Work in a separate work area / table / desk / cubicle.

**How can you cope with jobs that require you to work at a peak (fast) work pace? Check all of the strategies that you might need to use:**

- Take deep breaths when you are feeling stressed.
- Use headphones to help you stay focused on the task.
- Use specifically labeled trays, folders, shelves to keep your materials in one place and organized.
- Work in a separate work area / table / desk / cubicle to reduce distractions.
- Take scheduled breaks so you can “slow down” – eat, rest, and relax for a few minutes.

**There may be other strategies that could work for you. Brainstorm with someone who knows you well (i.e. family member, teacher, coach, counselor).**

List these ideas below:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_