

Advice From a Retired Husband

It is important for men to remember, as women grow older, it becomes harder for them to maintain the same quality of housekeeping they did when they were younger. When men notice this, they should try not to criticize.

Let me relate how I handle this situation. When I retired in December, it became necessary for Marilyn to get a full-time job, for extra income and for health-care benefits we need. It was shortly after she started working that I noticed she was beginning to show her age.

I usually get home from fishing or hunting about the same time she gets home from work. Although she knows how hungry I am, she almost always says that she has to rest for half an hour or so before she starts supper. I try not to complain; instead, I tell her to take her time and just wake me when she finally does put supper on the table.

She used to do the dishes as soon as we finished eating. Now it is not unusual for them to sit on the table for several hours after supper. I do what I can by reminding her several times each evening that they aren't cleaning themselves. I know she appreciates this advice, for it does seem to help her get them done before she goes to bed.

Now that she is older, she seems to tire so much more quickly. Our washer and dryer are in the basement. Sometimes she says she just can't make another trip down those steps. I don't make a big issue of it. As long as she finishes the laundry by the next evening, I am willing to overlook it. Not only that, but unless I need something ironed to wear to Monday's lodge meeting or to Wednesday's or Saturday's poker club or to Tuesday's or Thursday's bowling or something like that, I will tell her to wait until the next evening to do the ironing. This gives her a little more time to do some of those odds and ends - like shampooing the dog, vacuuming or dusting. Also, if I have a really good day of fishing, this allows her to gut and scale the fish at a more leisurely pace.

Marilyn is starting to complain a little occasionally. For example, she will say that it is difficult for her to find time to pay the monthly bills during her lunch break. Despite her complaining, I continue to try to offer encouragement. I tell her to stretch it out over two or even three days. That way she won't have to rush so much. I also remind her that missing lunch completely now and then wouldn't hurt her any, if you know what I mean.

When doing simple jobs, she seems to think she needs more rest periods. She had to take a break when she was only half finished mowing the yard.

I try to be supportive when she needs these extra breaks. I tell her to fix herself a nice, big, cold glass of freshly squeezed lemonade and just sit for a while. I tell her that as long as she is making one for herself, she may as well make one for me and take her break by the hammock so she can talk to me until I fall asleep. I know I probably look like a saint in the way I support Marilyn every day. I'm not saying the ability to show this much consideration is easy. Many men will find it difficult. Some will find it impossible. No one knows better than I, how frustrating women can become as they get older.

However, guys, even if you just yell at your wife a little less often because of this article, I will consider that writing it was worthwhile.

