

Living with fatigue

Information for you

Your occupational therapist is:


Contact number:

working
Together




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Fatigue can be hard to understand if you have never experienced it. Because it cannot be seen, it is often misunderstood. Unfortunately, there are no medications specifically for fatigue.

Fatigue is often thought of as muscle related but it also includes cognitive, emotional and social fatigue.

Fatigue is not a lack of motivation and it is different from tiredness. Tiredness will improve with rest whereas fatigue will not.

Certain conditions such as medications, treatments, anxiety, depression and poor sleep can all contribute to fatigue.



There are some common challenges to managing fatigue:

- having a long or endless 'to do' list
- other people's expectations of your roles and responsibilities
- fear of missing out
- not knowing how to relax

- doing too much on good days
- not knowing what your limitations are
- thinking you have no choice but to do what your body is telling you to do

There are some strategies that you can do to self-manage your symptoms at home, allowing you to maintain your quality of life and independence. These strategies are divided into two different techniques. Ones that increase our energy (energy restoration) and ones that make the most of the energy we have (energy conservation).

Energy restoration

Activity

Daily activities helps to regulate our bodies. We all need activities and without them, our mood, confidence and anxiety as well as our muscle strength can be effected.

Exercise

It may seem impossible to imagine exercising with such little energy, however, finding an activity that works for you such as walking, swimming, or yoga can actually increase energy. Try to incorporate small bouts of exercise into every day even if it is simply walking to the toilet or standing to make a hot drink.

Relaxation

As it is important to exercise, it is equally important to relax. Find a relaxing activity that works for you, for example, reading, mindfulness, meditation. Try to build time into your day for these activities as relaxation takes practice!

Work

If relevant, try to remain at work. Research shows that being at work can create a routine and provide a feeling of accomplishment, lifting your mood and energy. Speak with your manager regarding your condition and try to work out a routine that works for you. Your occupational therapist can help with this also.

Sleep

Ensure you are getting a good night's sleep. Speak to your occupational therapist if you are having difficulty getting to sleep; staying asleep; or not feeling refreshed when waking.



Light

We need some daylight to regulate our body clock. Consider keeping the curtains/blinds open through the day and using daylight bulbs during the winter. If you

can, it can be good practice to spend some time outside daily.

Diet

Ensure you are eating and drinking a healthy well balanced diet.

Energy conservation

Prioritisation

Only use energy for the things that are important to you or that you need to do yourself. Ask for help for the tasks that are not important to you.

Pacing

Allow yourself to rest after an activity that drains your energy. Stop before you have used all the energy in your tank. Try to do a little less on the good days and a little more on the not so good days.

Plan

Think about the activity before you do it. Plan your activities to spread them out throughout the day/week. If you have a good time of day, plan your activities for that time.

Simplify

If there is a cheat's way of doing something, take it. Anything you do seated, automatically makes it easier. Use aids and equipment to make tasks simple.

Useful resources:

Coping with fatigue | [NHS inform](#)

Sleep and tiredness - [NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

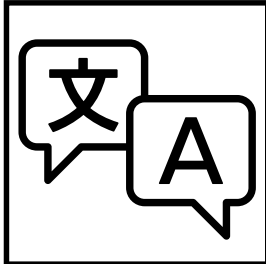
How to conserve your energy - [RCOT](#)

Tiredness (fatigue) | [Macmillan Cancer Support](#)

Your notes

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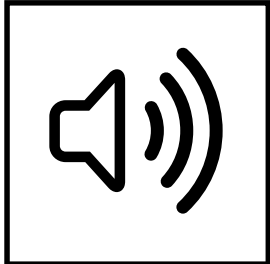
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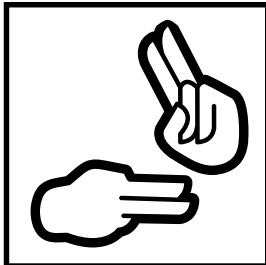
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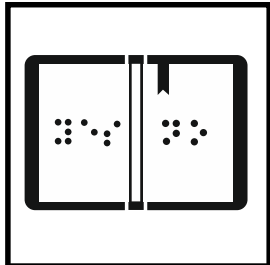
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