

Fatigue, sleep and daily function



Information for Patients

This guide provides practical advice to help you begin managing fatigue

Understanding Fatigue

Fatigue can be common in neurological conditions. It may be:

- A primary symptom (e.g. multiple sclerosis)
- Related to the extra effort needed to move, poor sleep, medication side effects, stress or sensory overload.

Fatigue can affect work, study, parenting, household tasks and social activities.

Activity Management

Everything we do requires energy. There are four main types of activity:

- **Physical** (e.g. walking, housework)
- **Cognitive** (e.g. thinking, reading, screen time)
- **Social** (e.g. conversations, social events)
- **Emotional** (e.g. stress, excitement)

You might have been able to do all the things you wanted to do before your condition started or worsened, however with fatigue some of the simple things might now feel challenging.

Boom and bust

Managing your energy levels can be challenging, especially when you've got your normal everyday tasks to be getting on with. It is common for people to fall into an energy 'boom and bust' cycle which means they do lots of activity whilst they have some energy (boom) but then pay for it afterwards as their energy levels crash (bust).

Breaking the "boom and bust" cycle

Start by establishing a steady baseline of activity.

Aim to do a similar amount each day rather than overdoing it on good days.

Think of your energy like an old phone battery — it needs regular top-ups throughout the day. Planned rest helps prevent crashes.

Tips for managing your energy levels:

Pacing

Break activities into smaller chunks with rest breaks in between.

- Example: Instead of vacuuming your whole house at once, vacuum one room, rest, and continue later or the next day.

Planning

Plan your activities across the day, week or month to spread them out.

- Example: space out appointments and social events to allow for recovery time.

Prioritising

Try to prioritise your to do list.

- Prioritise essential tasks and self-care.
- Make time for activities that you enjoy.

Building a routine

A routine can be an important part of activity management as a consistent daily routine can help stabilise symptoms.

- Experiment with different levels of activity and rest to find the right balance for you.
- Include regular rest breaks to prevent energy crashes.

Energy conservation and easy wins

Explore different ways of doing your everyday tasks.

- Sit down while brushing your teeth or preparing meals.
- Ask for help when needed instead of pushing yourself.

Resting Well

Rest is your most important fatigue management tool. Good quality rest means resting both body and mind. How you relax is personal to you however, breathing exercises, meditation or simply listening to music are often suggested as good ways to unwind.

How do I contact you if I think I need help?

Managing fatigue can be difficult and our service can help you. If you need help with your energy levels, contact us on.

Email: NEUROLOGYSERVICES@ecchcic.nhs.uk

Phone: 01493 809977 (Monday – Sunday, 07:00 – 20:00)

If contacting us, please state you wish to contact the Community Neurology service, as this helps us to identify you more quickly in our system.



If you would like this leaflet in large print, audio, Braille or in a different language, please contact us on **01502 445447**.

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