

## Healthy ageing & lifestyle

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### Fact Sheet No.6

### Fatigue Part 3: Top tips

#### Lifestyle

- Keeping a diary can be useful for reporting symptoms to your GP and for your own benefit to monitor progress:
  - you can record how severe you feel your fatigue is by devising a scoring system, using a scale of 1 to 10
  - you can record feelings of weakness and whether it is worse in the morning or evening
  - you can record if you feel that your fatigue is related to physical activity, or perhaps your mood
  - it is important to record what makes you feel better



- Make small changes to your daily routine using evidence from your diary, if you can identify what makes you tired and at what time of the day this occurs then you can start to make some adjustments
- Try to plan something to look forward to each day, even something like a favourite TV or radio programme; when you're feeling happy and positive you will usually feel more energized
- It is important to pace yourself, getting the balance right between exercise, activity and rest

## Health

- If you are experiencing increased levels of weakness, try to determine the underlying cause and ascertain whether this weakness is perceived or actual
- Eating nutritious food and taking enough fluids will help your general feeling of wellbeing, so try to eat smaller meals more regularly, instead of large meals which take a lot of energy to digest

## Physical

- Exercise of the right type and quantity e.g. yoga or Pilates; a physiotherapist can help you devise which type of exercise is best for you

## Mental

- Be honest about your situation with friends and family so they understand your limitations, and don't be afraid to say "no" on occasion
- Talking to other people who are living with the same condition about their experiences and how they cope can be motivating, and it could help to prevent you from feeling isolated
- Experiment with relaxation techniques such as mindfulness (meditation), for some people just 10 minutes a day can help them to re-energise

## Equipment

- If you use equipment or aids for your mobility make sure it is still fit for purpose, so that you reduce wear and tear on your joints. Using the right equipment will conserve energy and help to prevent falls

## Quality of life

Chronic fatigue, if left unchecked, can impact on many aspects of a person's life. Living with a disability or chronic condition will alter the way you prioritise and set goals and cause you to reassess the things you value in life. Set realistic goals and learn how to pace yourself. Fatigue is an issue that you may have to deal with and adapt to, so that it has a minimal effect on the quality of your life.

Keeping in touch with extended family and meeting up with friends can be energising. Don't be afraid to share your concerns with those closest to you, and don't forget that many people as they age will experience fatigue and aches and pains.



Try to avoid the company of negative people as they can affect your mood; this may be unintentional on their part, but the effect on others is just the same.

## **Summary**

The key aspects of managing fatigue in advancing years are recognising that it is a problem and then implementing the necessary changes / adaptations in order to minimise the impact on your life. Eating healthily, exercising within your capability, pacing yourself and making time for rest are all important. Equally, staying positive and involving family and friends, along with proper assessment by the appropriate healthcare professionals, will help in controlling levels of fatigue.

## **Disclaimer**

*The information and opinions shared on this website are based on my personal experience of working in the health sector and research I have carried out whilst writing articles; it is of a general nature and should not be used as a substitute for seeking medical advice. My aim is to ensure that this information is accurate and kept up to date, but you should always consult the appropriate healthcare professionals if you have a concern about your health.*

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