



# TIPS

## for MS Patients: Managing Fatigue

Fatigue is one of the most common symptoms of MS. It is characterized by the sudden loss of energy and the inability to continue an activity that is out of proportion to the activity undertaken. Patients with MS often experience a particular type of fatigue, or lassitude, that occurs daily, worsens as the day goes on, is aggravated by heat, and comes on more easily than normal fatigue. This “invisible” symptom can have a major impact on people’s lives. The following tips may help lessen fatigue’s impact on your daily life.

- ❑ **Relax.** Try to find 20 minutes per day for quiet meditation or some other type of peaceful relaxation.
- ❑ **Assess Your Capabilities.** Realistically evaluate your daily energy levels, and watch for warning signs of fatigue.
- ❑ **Pace Yourself.** A moderate pace may suit you better than rushing to accomplish everything quickly.
- ❑ **Take Frequent Rests.** It may be helpful to divide your day into periods of planned activity and planned rest.
- ❑ **Prioritize Activities.** Reserve your energy for those tasks you deem essential. Other tasks can wait. Whenever possible, group activities to conserve energy.
- ❑ **Ask for Assistance.** Delegate tasks you find difficult.
- ❑ **Use Assistive Devices.** Tools and devices can help make many daily tasks easier (eg, wheels on carts or chairs, aids for reaching and/or grasping).
- ❑ **Adopt a Good Posture.** Maintain an upright and symmetric posture during all tasks and when sitting or standing.
- ❑ **Limit Your Exposure to Heat.** Avoid extreme temperatures and hot showers or baths.
- ❑ **Exercise.** A regular regimen of light exercise can increase your energy levels and decrease deconditioning. Talk with your health care team about how much exercise you can handle.
- ❑ **Seek Medical Help.** An occupational or physical therapist may offer energy management techniques. A physician may prescribe medication.

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