

Managing Fatigue – Kerry Mutch

Fatigue is an overwhelming surge of tiredness that interferes with your quality of life and lowers self-esteem. Fatigue and depression go hand in hand.

One of the main factors that helps fatigue is drinking plenty of water – it can give you energy, gives your skin a healthy glow, stop headaches and relieves constipation. Instead of having huge glasses have a small bottle and take sips of water.

Causes of fatigue

1. Disability – this is what the TM has done to you
2. Sleep – if you are not getting enough sleep you need to get at least 6 hours sleep a night. If you are over sleeping this can also cause fatigue. Causes an imbalance of energy through lack of sleep or over sleeping.
3. Diet – Sugar/Junk food causes a rise in sugar but it also causes sugar levels to drop dramatically too. You should eat a balanced diet with lots of proteins as this helps to repair tissue.
4. Medications – some medications can cause fatigue
5. Mood – depression and stress – stress is like an energy bomb as soon as you become stressed the bomb is dropped and all your energy goes.
6. Exercise – if you do too much you become fatigued. However doing exercise in small chunks can give you more energy.

You can't do much about the disability but you can affect other aspects of your life that cause fatigue.

Primary fatigue is done by TM

Secondary fatigue is impinging on the TM. It is related to normal activities that are made harder by the TM.

Trigger factors of fatigue

- Not drinking enough water. – take regular sips
- Poor posture – it takes a lot of energy to do things badly; get help with this from a physiotherapist
- Heat/cold – a 1 degree change in temperature can majorly affect energy levels
- Infection/Virus
- Anaemia
- Not taking breaks

Work out how people not living with TM would do tasks – are you doing them in the same way? If not, you need to relearn how to do things.

Find a way to put energy into your body to then be able to take it out when you need it
If you don't use your muscles you lose them – a large part of your total disability is doing nothing.
If you do nothing, your body will want to retract to the foetal position.

Types of fatigue

- Physical fatigue – is the effort involved to do activities
- Cognitive Fatigue – mental tiredness linked in with low mood and not being able to think straight, difficulties with memory
- Psycho Social – If you are tired you will not want to go out and socialise, leading to low mood.

You need to learn to balance fatigue so you have energy and it is available when you need it. We are our own worst enemy by not planning. You need to plan to work out what are the most important things to achieve, prioritise them, and do small tasks first.

Make life easier for yourself by using equipment.

Do not get down about your energy levels – look at 3-6 months ago not yesterday. Improvements can be small and over time.

Ensure everything you do is in little steps not gigantic ones as this will make the fatigue worse.

Ensure you take breaks to sit down and breathe.

The main thing that came out of Kerry's speech was that you need to ensure you drink plenty of water.

Kerry kindly said that anyone can contact her about TM, NMO or ADEM. Her details are

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