

## Tips for managing fatigue

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## What can you do to manage your fatigue?

**Regardless of it's cause,  
there are things you can do about it!**

### Managing fatigue

- Fatigue management in scleroderma – scarce evidence
- Research in cancer and other rheumatic diseases: amenable to intervention
- 2-step approach:
  - (1) Identify and treat contributing factors (pain, emotional distress, sleep disturbance)
  - (2) Management of residual fatigue

### Talk to your doctor about fatigue

- Low blood (anemia)
- Medication that cause fatigue
- Inflammation
- Gastrointestinal problems
- Pain
- Poor sleep
- Depression
- Problems with mobility and hand function



### Managing fatigue: sleep

#### Sleep habits:

- Regular sleep schedule
- Use bed only for sleeping
- Be smart about napping
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol late in the day
- Find a comfortable sleeping position (e.g., elevate head of bed to reduce acid reflux)

#### Worry journal:

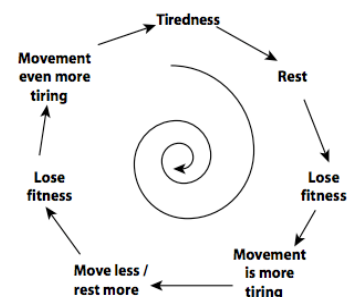
- Write worries down in a journal
- Choose a specific time each day to look at what you have written and address the problems your "worry time"

#### Relaxation:

- "Unwind" with something you enjoy
- Relaxation techniques, meditation



### Managing fatigue: stay active



## Managing fatigue: stay active

- Gentle, low intensity exercise, such as:
  - Walking
  - Yoga
  - Tai-chi
  - (Water) aerobics
  - Zumba
- Choose activity that you enjoy
- Modify activities to suit your physical abilities:
  - Yoga in seated position
  - Water aerobics in heated pool
  - Walk on indoor track or mall
- "Start low and go slow"



## What do you do to stay active?



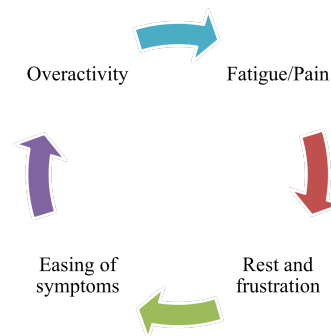
## Managing fatigue: activity pacing

*Consciously balancing activity and rest*

*"Before I learned about pacing I was just trying desperately to hold onto my old life – and failing to do so! Pacing has changed my focus from what I can't do to what I can do and is helping me to build from there."*

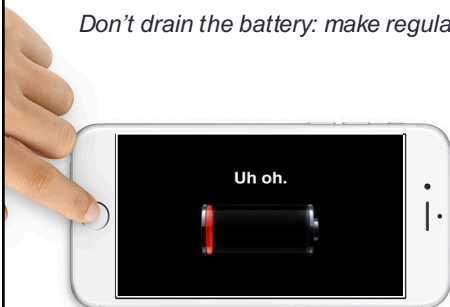


## Boom-and-bust cycle



## Managing fatigue: activity pacing

*Don't drain the battery: make regular top-ups*



## Activity pacing

**(1) Establish your baseline level** - amount of activity that you can do knowing that your fatigue won't increase to the point where you cannot do any activities anymore

**(2) Plan your schedule (with rest and relaxation!)**  
Prepare a realistic and detailed schedule for your day, with all the activities and rest periods clearly outlined.

**(3) Stick to it!**  
Start and stop activities based on time, not symptoms

## Activity pacing

**(1) Establish your baseline level** - amount of activity that you can do knowing that your fatigue won't increase to the point where you cannot do any activities anymore

\*Choose activity for pacing

\*Measure how long you can do it without large fatigue increase

\*Take the average and subtract 1/5th

Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Average Time	Average – 1/5
30 minutes	25 minutes	35 minutes	<b>30 minutes</b>	<b>24 minutes</b>

## Activity pacing

**(2) Plan your schedule (with rest and relaxation!)**

Prepare a realistic and detailed schedule for your day, with all the activities and rest periods clearly outlined.

Day	Activity (Time)	Time for Activity	Time for Rest
Monday	Graphic design project (9:30 am)	45 min	15 min
	Graphic design project (10:30 am)	45 min	15 min
	Eat lunch (11:30)	40 min	20 min
	Housework (2:00 pm)	24 min	15 min
	Grocery shopping (4:00 pm)	35 min	20 min
	Cook dinner (5:30 pm)	35 min	20 min

## Activity pacing

**(3) Stick to it!**

Start and stop activities based on time, not symptoms

- Don't forget to take your scheduled breaks, even if you don't feel tired.
- On a good day, do not do more than the pacing schedule allows
- On a bad day, follow the schedule as well as you can: you don't want to fall back into the cycle of overdoing your activities when you feel better.
- Remember that the aim is to maintain a balanced level of activity over the day and week!



## Summary points

**When it comes to exercise, remember:**

- Mild, regular exercise is important for breaking the cycle of fatigue.
- Choose activities are enjoyable and not too difficult.
- Modify activities to suit your physical abilities.
- Start easy and gradually increase the difficulty of your activity.

## Summary points

**For activity pacing, remember:**

- Pacing is about stopping an activity based on time and not on fatigue.
- Knowing your baseline activity level is important for effective pacing.
- Stick to your plan. Do not do more than scheduled on a good day, and try not to do less on a bad day.
- Do not get discouraged when you do not get your schedule right the first time: pacing your activities is a new way of planning your schedule, and this takes practice!

**Thank you for your attention!**



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