

Making the Most of your Energy & Taking Control of Fatigue



Definitions of Fatigue

- *“A persistent, subjective sense of tiredness related to cancer or cancer treatment that interferes with usual functioning.”*
 - National Comprehensive Care Network (2009)

- *“Fatigue is an umbrella term used to describe various sensations or feelings, and a variety of expressions of reduced capacity at physical, mental, emotional, or social levels.”*
 - Ahlberg, Ekman, Gaston-Johansson, Mock (2003)

Causes of Fatigue

- Effects of condition
- Effects of treatment
- Other existing medical conditions
- Exacerbation of symptoms of other medical conditions
- Other factors (worry about family, finances, work, etc)

- Wagner and Cella (2004)

How can fatigue be managed?

- Having information and talking about it
- Exercise
- Trying to manage anxiety and stress
- Changing ways of doing things and conserving energy
- Getting a balance of activity, rest and sleep
- Nutritional interventions
- 'Restorative experiences'

(Ahlberg et al 2003)



Information



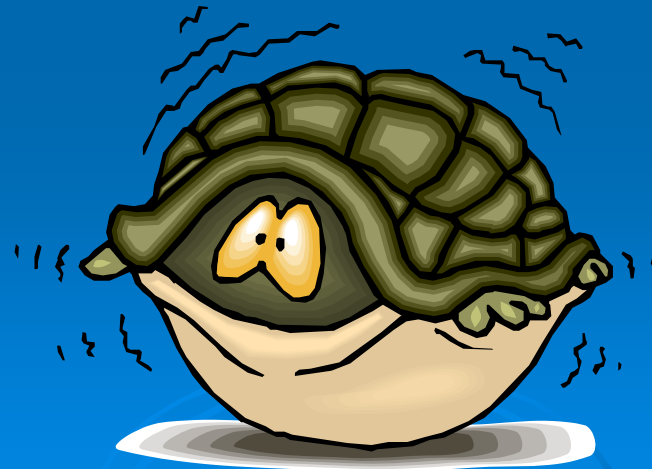
Exercise

Graded and regular exercise has been shown to improve the symptoms of fatigue



Managing Stress and Anxiety

- Relaxation
- Talking
- Support groups
- Distraction (e.g. listening to music)



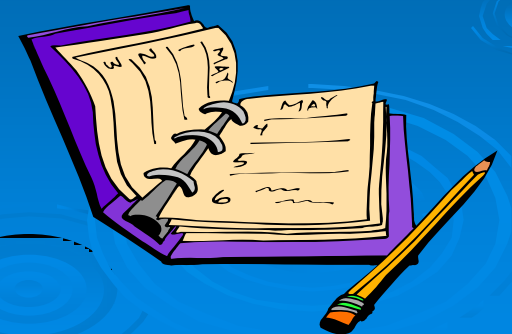
Making the most of your energy

Have a balance of activity and rest



Planning Activities

- Consider which times of the day are best for you
- Avoid unnecessary exertion
- Try to space activities out during the week and not cram it all in to one day



Imagine having a jar of energy each day.



Your energy jar is topped up once over night.

What would you like to use your energy on?

Remember not to empty the jar completely –
leave something in reserve



Nutrition



- Try to drink plenty of fluids
- Try having smaller portions
- Eat at times when your appetite is best

Sleeping Patterns



- Try to have a regular sleep / wake pattern
- Try to avoid sleeping during day
- Keep as active as possible during daytime
- Try to identify problems and worries well before going to bed
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol before bedtime
- Have your room at a comfortable temperature – maybe keep a window open

Mental Exhaustion

- Inform others when feeling overwhelmed or overloaded
- Try to cut out any distractions
- Write lists for activities e.g. shopping
- Keep a diary to help remember plan for the day and week
- Art / craft / gardening activities can help you to feel refreshed mentally



Setting & Working on your Goals

- Decide what you want to do – concentrate on 1 goal at a time
- Break the goal into smaller parts
- Make an action plan
- Ensure your goal is realistic
- Carry out the action plan
- Review the plan
- Reward yourself

Restorative Experiences

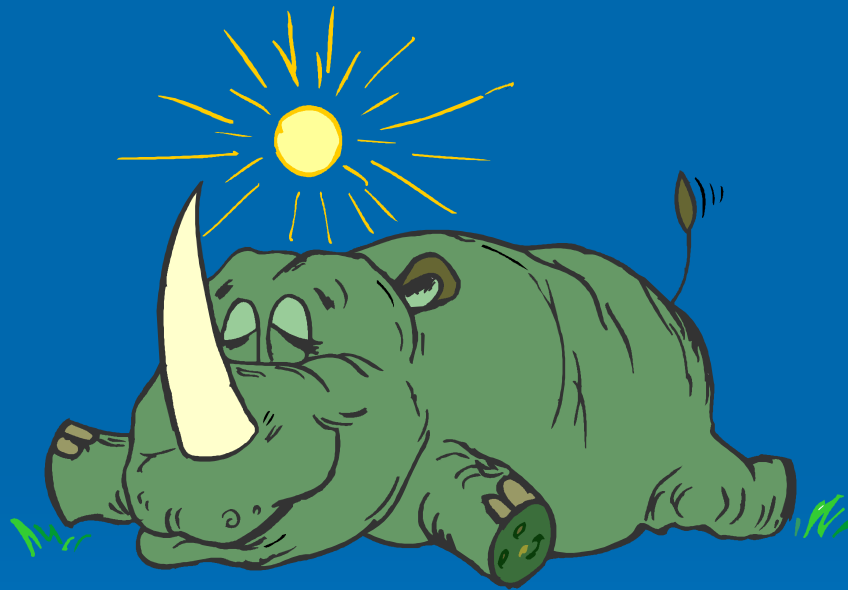
- Engaging interests
- Returning to normal living
- Breaking cycle of lethargy
- Combating cognitive fatigue
- Combating emotional fatigue



Summary

- Fatigue is often under reported or taken for granted.
- Whilst not taking away the fatigue completely, there *are* ways in which you can manage it.

Thank you for your time



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