



MANAGING FATIGUE

Queensland Health produced this excellent fact sheet, originally called "Managing Fatigue After Brain Injury". It contains many helpful suggestions to address the common problem of post-Stroke fatigue:

Fatigue is the weariness you feel from physical or mental effort. It is a common, lasting effect after recovery and rehabilitation from a brain injury. Sleeping difficulties and a change in sleeping patterns may develop in response to excess stress, which in turn may cause fatigue.

The following ideas may help you to manage fatigue better and return to your normal daily activities smoothly and quickly:

1. Try to remain organised and on time - rushing causes you to use more energy and may tire you more easily.
2. Keep a diary and write information down rather than trying to remember everything in your head.
3. Summarise information and pay attention only to the important details.
4. Use relaxation and mindfulness techniques for insomnia and stress.
5. Put off anything that is not absolutely necessary - don't spend time worrying about things that don't really matter.
6. Delegate responsibilities - others will be glad to assist, providing you ask and let them know you may need a hand.
7. Work a set routine. Do things that need to be done first, and take regular rest breaks. You may find that you need more rest breaks than you needed prior to the injury. Rest is important. Even when you are doing simple tasks, such as getting dressed, rest breaks are needed.
8. Work during the time of day you feel most like working and rest when you feel the need - listen to what your body wants to do and try to work with it. Fighting your need to sleep will increase feelings of exhaustion and despair.
9. Set realistic goals. Do not expect too much from yourself and allow plenty of time to complete tasks. Achieve the priorities and look after yourself.
10. Try to maintain a clear mind. Write down and discuss problems/worries to help prevent them building up and using more of your energy than they deserve.
11. Do things slowly, regardless whether it takes a long time or not. Rushing tasks may account for further injury.
12. Have equipment ready before starting tasks. This will make it easier for you as it will reduce the energy needed to get things ready and provide more energy to do the task.

PLEASE TURN OVER



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Grading activity levels

When you resume your normal activities, it is important to pace yourself and allow for recovery days. A gradual increase in physical activity, domestic tasks and returning to work should occur over a period of weeks and means that you will have less time to sleep and rest. In order to gradually increase work load and decrease rest periods, you will need to start at the bottom and work your way up.

An example of this may include cleaning the house. This will involve the following:

1. Start cleaning one room at a time on every second day and rest in the afternoons.
2. This may then increase to one room each day and then two rooms a few times per week. You will need less rest time as your fatigue decreases.
3. Soon, you will be able to clean your whole house in one or two days with only small amounts of rest.

Remember

Do not be afraid to take a few minutes to relax, even in the middle of a task. You will feel refreshed and more able to complete what you started.

- Allow yourself recovery days.
- Don't feel guilty about having a break.
- Work when you feel like it and rest when you know your body needs to take a break.
- Continue to take time for yourself using relaxation strategies on a regular basis.

References

[The Acquired Brain Injury Outreach Service](#) - ABIOS is a specialist community rehabilitation service for people with acquired brain injury, their carers and service providers

[Synapse](#) (formerly known as the Brain Injury Association of Queensland) - information for service providers, adults and children on ABI and changes following an acquired brain injury

This article was found online at
<http://www.health.qld.gov.au/pahospital/biru/education/fatigue.asp>

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