

Fighting Fatigue

At times, life can take some planning. Everyday activities, such as a quick shopping trip, can suddenly become a real chore. This section was developed to give MS patients useful ideas and tips on combating fatigue and conserving energy....

Overcoming fatigue

A good night's sleep usually overcomes physical and mental fatigue. In MS, however, the type of fatigue experienced is much more debilitating than just being tired.

MS affects muscle control, strength and coordination so that more energy than usual is needed to carry out routine activities. Neuromuscular fatigue can make simple tasks feel like mammoth jobs and collapsing in the armchair seems to be the best solution.

It is possible to overcome fatigue if you think ahead. Avoid overexertion and delegate household work where possible. Fight fatigue by drawing up a battle plan, then engage your troops to help you beat the blues.

If you're battle-weary, don't be afraid to bring in reinforcements - an hour of practical help today could stop your energy sources from being drained tomorrow.

Keep in mind, however, that severe fatigue does not normally lead to relapses or worsening of MS. You may well decide that a special occasion (e.g. a friend's party, a school event) can be managed if you minimise fatigue as much as possible.

Tips to fight tiredness

- take cool showers not hot baths
- keep physically fit without over-exerting yourself
- lose weight if overweight
- follow a sensible diet
- allow 'time-off' between social occasions
- in the afternoon avoid tasks that require concentration/physical exertion
- assess household jobs and roles - are you more effective doing the paperwork than the gardening?