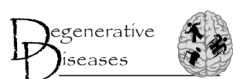


Fatigue and Multiple Sclerosis

FACT SHEET



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Most persons with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) complain of fatigue. Fatigue is a lack of energy that can affect physical or mental abilities. It can cause slower reactions, problems with thinking clearly, clumsiness, weakness, and balance problems. For some, it can make simple tasks like getting out of bed or standing up from a chair very hard.

Fatigue from MS affects a person's ability to do every day and job-related activities. This kind of fatigue can last for a long time (weeks or more) and is not necessarily made better with rest or sleep. A new bout of fatigue may signal the beginning of an attack of other MS symptoms. The causes of fatigue for people who have MS are not yet well known. Some things that can reduce a person's energy level are overdoing physical activity, being in hot and/or humid weather, stress, and medicines. In addition to the treatment your doctor provides, physical therapy can help you deal with fatigue.

How Can Physical Therapy (PT) Help?

A physical therapist (PT) will talk with you about your health and how fatigue affects you. The PT will test your flexibility, strength, balance, and mobility, and then develop a course of treatment specific to you.

Proper exercise can help to reduce your fatigue and improve your function. Your PT can customize an exercise program to meet your needs. This program can work on your strength, endurance, balance, breathing, ability to move smoothly, and can prevent muscle tightness.

You can be taught about ways to keep your energy high like planning your daily activities to have rest breaks, cutting back on your to-do list, using good body movements so that your muscles don't have to work so hard, and keeping your body cool to prevent overheating.



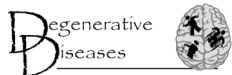
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Physical therapists can recommend equipment to make moving about less tiring and safer. The PT will make sure the equipment is a proper fit for you and teach you how to use it correctly. These may include:

- walking aids like canes and wheeled walkers that make you more steady;
- braces that support your feet so that your toes don't drag;
- rails or grab bars to hold on to for support, and transfer boards or lifts to help you change position;
- a wheelchair or scooter if walking is too exhausting.

PTs can also look at places you are in frequently (home, work, cars, etc.) and suggest changes to the surroundings or tools to make moving around easier. If fatigue related to MS is an issue for you, consider seeing a PT. This and other MS symptoms can benefit from physical therapy treatment.



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