

ENERGY CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES TO MANAGE FATIGUE IN MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

THROUGH RAIN OR SHINE

Fatigue is a common symptom in MS¹. “MS in focus” describes it as the “hidden symptom”² of MS because it is something that the patient experiences, but family, friends and colleagues cannot observe it.

Due to the huge impact fatigue has on the patient, it is very important to use energy conservation principles to reduce this impact.

The goal of energy conservation is to ensure that a person has enough energy to complete important and desirable activities **before** they run out of energy³.

Studies have shown the effectiveness of energy conservation on fatigue in people with MS^{3,4}.





If you have a positive attitude, you have half the battle won against MS.”
MICHELLE ROLLINS, MS PATIENT

“MS in focus” suggests these strategies to minimize fatigue²

AT WORK

- Preplan your work – **do the most important tasks first**
- Spread heavy and light tasks throughout the day
- Schedule regular rest periods
- Set priorities and eliminate unnecessary tasks
- Arrange your work area so that all you need is within normal reach
- Use good posture to prevent fatigue
- Use a telephone that allows hands-free usage
- For a better grip on pens and pencils, wrap them in a piece of sponge or in multiple rubber bands

AT HOME

- Urge your family to do their share of physical chores and allocate the most demanding to others
- Transport household items using a utility cart
- Prepare meals at a counter where you can sit
- Plan meal preparation so that you can save trips around the kitchen
- Shop by phone or online
- Use fans or cooling garments to avoid overheating
- Try to optimize sleep – if you are experiencing difficulties, discuss this with your doctor

It can be difficult to apply these principles but as fatigue becomes more of a problem, modification of ordinary tasks may become necessary. Over time it will be well worth the effort as studies show that applying these principles has a long term impact on fatigue and how it impacts peoples’ lives.

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References:

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2. Fatigue. Available at: <https://www.msif.org/about-ms/symptoms-of-ms/fatigue/> [Accessed on 12 June 2020]
3. Evidence that Energy Conservation Education is an Effective Strategy for Managing Fatigue of Persons with Multiple Sclerosis. Available at: https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.ms-care.org/resource/resmgr/Articles/Article0024_EnergyConsr.pdf [Accessed on 12 June 2020]
4. Mathiowetz V, Finlayson M, Matuska KM et al. Randomized Controlled Trial of an Energy Conservation Course for Persons With Multiple Sclerosis. *Mult Scler.* 2005 Oct; 11(5):592-601

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