



Otago Community Hospice | PO Box 8002  
293 North Road, Dunedin, New Zealand  
Tel: 03 473 6005 | Fax: 03 473 6015  
reception@otagohospice.co.nz

The family members' guide to:

# MANAGING FATIGUE

Your guide to:

# MANAGING FATIGUE

[www.otagohospice.co.nz](http://www.otagohospice.co.nz)

Otago Community Hospice has unfenced boundaries onto Lindsay Creek and North Road. Please be aware of associated hazards.

Reviewed: 1 September 2013



## fatigue management

---

Fatigue is more than just feeling tired, it can cause a lack of energy and motivation to participate in everyday activities, and can rarely be resolved by rest.

Fatigue is very common during an illness. You are likely to have good and bad days, and your energy levels will vary.

It is important you consult your doctor or a district nurse about being fatigued to see whether something may be able to be done.

You may feel unable to participate in all the activities that you want to. You may have to break up activities into smaller parts in order to still participate in them.



*Fatigue management strategies will help you to get more out of your day, and help you to save your energy for activities that are the most important to you.*

## handy tips

---

- Ensure that the things you value get the time they deserve for example, spending time with friends and family, rather than doing chores.
- Resting means letting both the body and the mind relax— so it may mean doing nothing and resting rather than sitting/ lying watching television for example.
- Delegate tasks which are not important for you, to family and friends.
- Talk to a District Nurse or Hospice professional about equipment that could make tasks easier and less tiring.
- Record your favourite television programmes if you are too tired to watch them.
- You can borrow talking books from your library which read stories aloud to you.



## restore your energy

---

Relaxation and deep breathing techniques can help you regain your energy and refresh your mind and body. The trick is finding which technique works best for you. This technique can help you regain energy when you are worn out. You can do this technique for as long or as short as you wish.

### Simple Deep breathing technique

- Sit quietly and bring your attention to your breathing.
- Concentrate on breathing through your nostrils.
- Place your hands on each side of your belly button, with fingertips touching.
- Take a deep breath through your nostrils and feel your stomach rise.
- Slowly breath out through your mouth and feel your stomach fall.
- Continue breathing slowly and deeply.

**Do this for about 5 minutes or the time that feels right for you.**

More relaxation techniques are available from the Otago Community Hospice

## organising your environment

---

Your environment can have a huge impact on your energy and fatigue levels.

Useful ways to **conserve energy**:

- Use natural light as much as possible.
- Keep the room at a comfortable temperature. Heat can make you sleepy, but if the room is too cold you spend all your energy keeping warm.
- Keep background noise to a minimum as you may find this tiring. It can take a lot of energy to concentrate on one thing when there are other things going on in the background. For example, if the TV is on and you are trying to have a conversation with someone, you will most likely be using double the energy to concentrate on the conversation.
- Get fresh air and sunlight each day. This will provide you with essential vitamins to keep you healthy and sunlight can positively affect your mood.
- Move to another room during the day if possible. It may feel better to have a change of environment.

Fatigue is a common symptom when you have health problems

## conserving your energy

- Decide when you are feeling at your best, and plan to do activities and see visitors at these times.
- Plan rest times for the times you usually feel most tired. Ask friends and family not to ring or visit at these times. You could also put a sign on your door, for example, "Resting, please leave a note or phone later."
- Learn to say 'No' to visitors and activities if you do not feel up to it.
- Try not to feel bad if you need to ask visitors to leave.



**Resting will help you regain energy**

## pacing and prioritising your activities

- Save your energy for the activities which are the most important to you.
- Try easier or shorter versions of the activities which you enjoy. For example instead of going out in to the garden, you could sit and plant seedlings into pots.
- Break up activities and allow rests period in between. For example do 5 minutes of the activity and take a 2 minute break before carrying on. An activity you could break up could be as simple as reading the newspaper, reading just the first 2 pages before having a break then carry on for another two pages before another break.
- Spread activities throughout the day, and allow time in between to rest in order to regain energy. For example do one activity in the morning. After lunch have a rest. Then do one more activity in the afternoon, and have another rest before dinner.
- Don't be scared to ask for help when you need it, even if its to pick the newspaper off the floor.

