

PACING



Proper Pacing



Effective pacing is indispensable to successful recovery from ME/CFS.

It is not a cure by itself, but it is an essential leg of treatment.

Accepting Reality



People with CFS do not have as much energy as healthy people.

We have to work within our limits or suffer the consequences.

Post-exertional malaise (PEM) is a devastating fatigue that occurs when energy boundaries are not respected. PEM usually lasts 1 to 2 weeks.

Assessing Your Baseline Energy

Everyone has a baseline. It's just smaller than we would like.

It is good to look at the necessary things first. These are the affairs of daily living (ADLs). How long can I do each activity without tiring?

Personal hygiene and grooming

Showering

Cleaning house

Cooking

Driving a car

Doing bills

Talking on the phone

Shopping

Simple yardwork



Assessing Your Baseline Energy - continued

There is a very human need for recreation and leisure time activities. How long can I do each activity without tiring?

Sitting up watching a video.

Reading

Talking on the phone

Walking

Entertaining guests

Artwork or crafts

Video games

Any other activity you do regularly



Assessing Your Baseline Energy - continued

Many people have important obligations despite having to deal with the limitations of CFS

If you have employment, how long can you work continually without feeling fatigued?

Childcare is more complex as it is never-ending. Nevertheless, how long can you stay busy with a variety of tasks before you feel tired?



Making a Plan



- Write down your assessments of how much time you safely have for each activity.
- Break your day down into three periods – morning, afternoon, and evening.
- Plan each period for the present day, mainly to recognize where you could possibly run into trouble by overdoing things.
- Plan necessary breaks, restrict activities as necessary, set limits, and create strategies for predictable energy drains.
- *Step outside the box.* Do you need to ask anyone else for help? Can you hire someone? Do you need to be more flexible in your expectations? Is there a more energy-efficient way to accomplish a task? Is there something you would do best to let go of?

Taking Appropriate Rest Breaks

Once you have established your limits for individual activities, please make sure to take effective rest breaks when needed.

Recognize that when we are stimulated, we cannot effectively judge our energy levels. Taking a break after working, moving, or exercising helps us correctly assess how we are doing.

The main benefit of proper pacing is to avoid backsliding and post-exertional malaise (PEM). As you will learn, the Power Up program will teach you how to build energy. The continuous increase in core energy can only occur when there is a firm platform of pacing. We must avoid losing more energy than we gain each day.

