

Thoughts about Exercise and ME/CFS

For those who have recovered 75% or more from ME/CFS, I am interested in how, or if, you incorporated regular movement into your daily schedule. Some questions would be: 1) What movements did you start with? 2) What were some key things you learned? 3) Did you move up to doing any regular exercise, and what type? 4) Could you describe your progression with exercise? e.g. list duration, distances, or intensity. These questions are just a guide, and you can answer in any way you like. I will post this in several different online communities. This is an opportunity for those experienced with combating this disorder to share what they have learned to benefit others. I am compiling a database and will share all the answers in a file. Thanks for your help!

BH Yes. I worked with a PT and started with lying down exercises and moved to standing ones. The main thing I did, with her guidance, is daily walking. I started with 12 minutes per day because that's what we discovered I could tolerate. I did that for 10 days. If I had no symptoms for the majority of days, I then increased to 15 min for 10 days. A couple times (getting past the 20 min and 40 min marks) I had to go back to less time. I walked for 186 days before meeting my goal of walking around a nearby lake (3.5 miles!) I continue to do daily exercise - now either walking or water aerobics and I'd credit this gradual increase in exercise as a big part of my healing process.

I created a private FB group of friends who are my support network and posted daily with pictures from my walk, the wins and the challenges

RT For those who have POTS, the AdaPT and CHOP exercise protocols are very good. They begin with gentle recumbent exercise and build up gradually. The group [Exercising with POTS Dysautonomia](#) is helpful here.

LH For continuous exercise, I started with short walks, maybe 5 minutes total. I gradually increased, and can now walk 30 to 40 minutes without stopping.

For intermittent walking (like shopping), I started with about 20 minutes in one shop, and gradually increased, to where I'm ok for up to about 2-3 hours if shopping.

ACC We started from bedbound phase with sitting in a 30° reclined pillow for 5 min 😊 increased this by a little every here and there (didn't measure time), I just know that around 3 months later we could sit for 1h in the reclined pillow. We started sitting in a normal position with legs on bed and sometimes legs on the ground - also for short times, around 1-2 months later this was also possible for 1-2 h without a pause. Then we started walking - first 30 sek 1x a day and since this was easy we moved to 3x 1 min a day and from this increased weekly or sometimes monthly depending on overall health (like no increase if pem or flu or other stuff that were going on and made it more stressful) by around 30 seks so we are now at 6 min walking 3x a day which is around 6 months later and are going strong 🏆

Anon 437 I'd say I'm around the 75% mark, relative to my worst around 2 years ago. Still some way to go on my journey but I'm mostly functional in day to day life. I always try to incorporate as much movement as possible without triggering PEM. My main exercise is on an electric bicycle. I started doing a mile or 2 (10 mins) with a heart rate monitor keeping my heart rate around 75bpm average. I've slowly built up to being able to do 20 miles with 90bpm average HR. I'm certainly not doing that every day (the cumulative impact would be too much) but usually do a shorter ride 3 or 4 times a week. The bike has been a great tool because I find it easier to regulate and measure effort than walking, it's more predictable and you can lower intensity to something that is barely more than standing if you feel you've pushed too far. I walk as much as possible day to day, keep an eye on steps, and can do walks of up to 5 miles, though that feels a stretch. Do a bit of yoga. Lymphatic massage. Some resistance training, pressups, pull ups, etc - starting with one. Two. Three... If there's anything I've learnt, it's that it takes great care. The cumulative impact is not to be underestimated. Keeps efforts consistent for a couple of weeks, and if no PEM, then increase very slightly. My strategy has always been never to trigger PEM. In the early days a lot of my movement was just housework and I didn't have capacity for much else. I don't really differentiate the types of "exercise" too

much, I've just always looked to keep effort consistent, avoid PEM, and allow capacity to expand naturally. I typically don't allow heart rate to go beyond 100 but will occasionally test short intervals (10 seconds or thereabouts) up to 130.

TB I'd love to follow this post. I'm not 75% health, it's definitely less (but I'm very proud and happy with it so far). I just started dancing more/longer. Just to what feels good. I had to hold that back for so long. Now when I listen to music I can let go a bit more (and more as I started with wiggling).

VW Hi, I started with gentle yoga, but I'd done it before illness and just toned it right down. I did Suzy Bolt long covid yoga and some lighter things I knew, seated or on my hands and knees for short periods. I also walked v short distances and built up v slowly. I often got to the end of my drive with support but was pleased I'd got out.

I always tried to find some success in movement, however small.

This would be almost 4 yrs ago and I'm fine now. Can walk miles and do yoga every day!

I thought v important to keep moving but rest afterwards, I didn't stay in bed with LC, I thought the movement around the house was also good for me, to get to my settee and back etc

I guess my perspective was that moving was good, if appropriate and small. Better than not moving at all.

LL I mainly just walk and build that into day to day life. Partly I realized bus service was stressing me out...now see walking as an activity in its own right rather than a journey time or inconvenience. Its more of a natural progression than scheduled. Found could walk on flat surface for ages but hills and stairs more tiring. General upwards trend but listen to my body. Tried gym classes often too much and have to schedule too much in advance. Also like being outside.

SC I was similar to Rachel Whitfield. I basically started with what I could do without making my symptoms terrible. I began adding in one minute of walking for example and then increasing this to 2 minutes provided that I felt okay and my sleep was stable. It was important to understand that I would have mild symptoms but this was just my nervous system kicking up a fuss from something new, so I stay consistent with Activity. After a few months, I decided to remove the times and aim for landmarks or goals such as being able to go in the local shop to buy something or school pick up. All of this was about creating safety essentially until the point when I do these things, but don't really question them anymore. I am still working on recovery so I do have my limits but I hope to apply this to my even bigger goals in the future.

RL I was bed bound but can now hike up mountains /run 5 miles, steady pace & differently than before.

1) somatic gentle yoga once feeling I could & vagal nerve breathing/scan which help relax prep body 2) listening to body/ understanding I could push myself physically if I'd experienced stress 3) I graded/paced lowered expectations of self todo what I could then built up to somatic yoga every morning & only now 2 runs a week. Also dog walks but yesterday ran then realised a dog walk pushed me too far & my balance /speech was affected 4) gradual use SMART goals & realise it's not a straight line. Also do something that's fun, like Zumba that's not just about movement. Find what you love, plan it for the week& only build upon when you can! Best wishes

Anon 788 1) Qigong (Zhineng Qigong) as part of recovery and walks that started from one turn around the house to today's 5 k 2) Learned that physical activity is not dangerous 3) Still do Qigong and walks, free dancing at home, no other exercise 4) The walks started at one turn around the house, then two, then three - slow progress. Then extended to a walk around the block, then two and so on... Extended every week. Slowly increasing. Then started with Qigong - at first sitting, then standing. The Qigong was after intensive courses. So the mind was involved as well.

Many people with ME/CFS are afraid to move. I think my progress has been a combination of mental work (Qigong and meditation), physical work and diet change (huge difference!!! Turned to the protocols of Anthony William / [Medical Medium](#))

RW I started by gradually building up but I found it better to set goals like walk to and of road or walk to shop rather than timed goals when I went over timed goals I would worry it was too much and be looking for symptoms

The point where I fully recovered was where I let go of counting how much I walked, cycled, moved. I stopped measuring. I now couldn't tell you what I do in an average day. This was an important part of my recovery

SP This was a critical aspect of my recovery.

I used walking, dumbbells and stretching in a gradually exposed way. I started from bedridden and unable to walk to the bathroom.

I used the approximate increase of 10% every 2 to 3 weeks. This was used alongside the concept of progress cycles/adjustment periods.

LT My goal was always to move my body no matter how sick I was even if it was 5 minutes of stretching. I now can walk an hour daily (probably more if I wanted). I also lift light weights, do barre workouts, etc. The Peleton app has always been my friend at every recovery stage. The very cold air is hard on my lungs so I do struggle more in the winter.

LG I am happy to share what I have learned through my own journey.

For many of us navigating ME/CFS, movement can feel like a very high-stakes conversation with our nervous system. I started with tiny, gentle somatic movements, often while lying in bed or sitting. These were less about 'exercise' and more about reconnecting with my felt sense and moving out of a protective freeze state.

The biggest lesson was learning to move with my body's current capacity rather than pushing against it. I had to stop justifying my limits and start nurturing them, choosing safety over the urgency to 'get better' quickly.

Today I value what I call 'gentle walks on my nervous system'. These are intentional walks in nature where the focus is on noticing 'glimmers' of safety and beauty rather than reaching a specific distance.

My progress wasn't linear or measured by kms. Instead, it was about expanding my window of tolerance. I only increased the duration or intensity of my walks when my nervous system could stay grounded and regulated throughout the entire experience and the following day.

RS I first started exercising with some light yoga. That boosted my confidence, and I would do a little walking when I felt good. Eventually, I was walking a mile or so fairly regularly. After 4 years, I tried interval training. I would walk, then jog a short distance (10-20 feet), then walk again, and keep repeating this. I started with one block but, over a 6-month period, worked up to about 2 miles. I was careful not to get overly out of breath. I was also super-careful about pacing with my other activities and got plenty of rest. This overall strategy worked amazingly well. I felt recovered enough after 6 months to go back to school and then work full-time. I never again experienced PEM.

KM

It's such an interesting question. I remember it being the only time I practiced pacing - as I had this new found appreciation for my body, and this ability to listen to it and support it. So, it made perfect sense for me to not go running out the gates.

So, after some time gaining courage I started to test the water bit by bit everyday. A short walk, a walk to the shops, a trip into town, then real exercise a few months later. 5 minutes spinning, 10 minutes and on and on.

I was lucky, as I didn't have set backs, twinges - no symptoms at all. So, my fear subsided. However, when you're trying to view symptoms as safe and keep the faith I think that is a whole different kettle of fish that takes a new level of bravery and strength

KT My personal experience is when I'm able to walk, I do that. I do some squats and lift one-pound weights. **I try to do a little each day when I'm feeling better.**

GC I went to a **pilates class** (with a teacher I know from before I got ill). She put me in with others with MS or bad backs or whatever. She always told me to do half the reps or skip a movement if it was really high energy demand. She encouraged me to lie on the floor resting if I started to get fatigued. **Made a huge difference to feel that I could do something!**

KH First, I had financial security and the environment to rest when I got sick 19 years ago. I was still and let my body rest because that's what it needed. **When I started to feel like I could exercise, I was invited to play women's indoor beginner soccer.** I was always athletic and had played in high school. It was extremely beginner. Hardly any running. For the first time I didn't crash. I went back every week religiously. Just baby steps once a week. I got to the point I could play multiple nights on the most advanced teams. I've found that I will never be able to exercise regularly though. Like running multiple times a week to train for a race. That burns me out. **Find something that brings you joy and baby step it. If you crash, you recover and try something new. Never give up.**

CW I found that a regular exercise routine (a certain exercise, on a certain day a week) is impractical as ME has its own schedule and more likely than not I didn't feel too well on the "exercise day" and had to postpone, which then upsets the schedule.

So basically I "exercise" whichever day I feel good.

Generally I find gym exercises more tolerable, with moderate weights and long breaks between sets and slowly starting at ~20 minutes and then increasing duration and weight as tolerated. I found that doing gym stuff that only trains isolated muscles works best (the opposite would be burpees, too straining).

Any exercise down the lines of cardio is very difficult as the risk for PEM is very high. I used to get PEM just from 20min super slow rowing. These days I can do an hour on my Ebike with no, or only very mild PEM. But it has taken me months to get there.

Yoga is good as well but I don't always manage a full hour depending how straining the yoga session is. Sometimes I just lay on my back for half the yoga session when I notice it gets too much.

Whatever I do, I try to avoid PEM.

You are not a "hero" for pushing through a straining exercise/class, you just ruin the progress you made.

KP I have just bought a **rowing machine and doing 5 minutes a day** not too much tension and not going at a mad pace I have pots so I have to wear compression clothing but I read building up your leg muscles can help.

SC My first walk was no more than three minutes to the bottom of my road. Fell back into bed exhausted. Two days with no exercise to recover then went again until I did not need my bed after. **Gradually over weeks it became a five minutes walk, then seven, then 10. Months down the line I was walking for 30 minutes but if I pushed myself too hard I went backwards and had to reduce the time so learnt it had to be a very slow, gradual, consistent increase and listening to my body on a bad day.** Further down the line I introduced swimming which then further increased my stamina but again it was the same slow process of building up how much I could do whilst listening to how my body was responding so as not to cause a relapse. I have had ME twice so second time around I knew what it took to recover by introducing exercise in small increments. It does work but do not expect immediate results. It takes months/years to get back to what I call "ME recovered normal".

TS **I second very slow walks. Start short and easy and keep doing what feels comfortable and gently add a bit more. I find weight training easier** - find what you can manage and every little bit you do helps more than doing nothing but nothing is okay too if your body needs it.

Lipo NMN has switched my brain on and kept my energy levels from crashing (I'm not saying this works for everyone). When I get pain flares I use red light therapy.

HF I did exercise and stretching I could do lying down. Pilates was the most useful. But there is a lot of stretching and Pilates I can do lying down.

EH Walking, biking, swimming. All in little bits

BP I'm not 100% better yet, but better than when I started. I've been doing slow walks, not to a schedule or distance, just when I feel up to it, and instead of having a checklist ie. walk 2km today, I included it into lifestyle like having to walk around the shops, or from my car to the beach. I found being less rigid and less "tick box" helped for a period of time until I'm ready to progress. I also do my own version of "yin yoga" at home. Sometimes it's stretching, fascia work, breathwork, sitting still, twists, releases. I used to surf most days but now I just get in the ocean and body surf a couple of waves to get the feel. However, if you want details, I can probably walk about 1-2km comfortably now, however, I notice it's easier with friends, I don't focus on the distance and have that resistance in my brain about being scared to over do it. When I'm by myself I notice I think more about that. The stretching can be literally 5-20 minutes depending on how I'm feeling. But the main thing for me is incorporation movement into life and not as exercise. So I can go to the shops now and walk around getting stuff, carry to and from car, clean around the house. That's more important in progress and integration for me until that becomes normal for a period of time. Then I might go back to focusing on "exercise" specific like how far I walk.

CP I started getting out and went for a short walk around the block, but only if I felt up to it. Later, when I was feeling a bit better, I started to do swimming lessons but I didn't go mad. At first my arms felt the pain so I would take regular breaks and do another length. Gradually, the strength built up and I managed 25 lengths. The first 2 years, I had to just rest up and listen to my body. My headaches were bad. Once they eased 2 years later I started recovery.

MKB Started with 10 mins in the warm water community pool, built up to an 1 hour over time x 1 per week. Build up to 2 to 3 days per week. Walking in the water and general balance exercise. Water resistance movement with kick board or noodle. Understanding the term pacing will help even more to finding the balance. I am unable to do any other exercise outside water as I have a crash for days 🙄 Once that routine is broken for what ever reason, sickness, fatigue, pain flare.. I start water exercise again from the beginning 10 mins at a time and while pacing.

EB I'm not 100% better, but I am now not bedbound, which is a win! Your exercise should start out with learning how to pace, how to take breaks, that sort of stuff? Until I was able to do that, I was struggling a lot more. And be kind to yourself.

My actual exercise started out with literally just standing. I'd increase my standing time by like, a minute or so every week? (I started with 2 minutes a day, once a day, supported by a counter.)

After standing became easier AND comfortable, I started VERY basic stretching, for like 6 minutes- mostly seated stuff, or things you can do laid down (I avoided bending stuff due to POTs & dizziness).

After that feels comfortable, try walking, but start really slow, & somewhere flat. I slowly increased it (I started literally walking for like 3 mins with a cane). (i would say, take care using a cane as I bought one, and while it helped my mobility it has done a lot of damage to my shoulder).

Honestly, from there, focus on just increasing walking & stretching, but very very slowly, and learning which days you shouldn't do it on. Being able to tell which days it will trigger a flare is very very important.

Also, make it fun! I used to do mine with a friend, as part of a dog walk, walking somewhere I enjoyed local, that kind of stuff.

As you start to feel more confident, you can start to add things like step goals, or other gentle exercises (swimming is great, so is cycling (especially on a cycling machine)). But once again, stick to gentle.

Also, don't expect results overnight, I was 17 when I started being bedbound, & only when I was 21/22 ish was I able to get out and about and do things consistently.

Depending on where you struggle, you can also buy gym aids at home that can be helpful. For example, my hand strength massively deteriorated, so my mum bought me some climbers exercise balls, and they could be done from bed.

BCC I'm almost at 75%. I actually started with doing leg exercises in bed, but only in days where I had bursts of energy. Then I started with one step outside my bedroom door, increasing it little by little over about a year or year and a half to 4.5 kilometers. I then did the elliptical, teaching my body how to understand that cardio is safe, building up on the elliptical to 4.5 kilometers, and mixing in running with just more of a walking speed.

And then I tried a few other things because I was getting very bored with this.

I tried bike riding, I tried hiking, and I was still very bored with that.

So I tried salsa, and that I really loved. I was still really unproportionally weak in the abdominals and the back because I wasn't walking all that often. And the rest of the day I was usually lying flat Or I'm like slouched over on some kind of soft thing instead of sitting at a desk bc I was bed bound for 10 years and not building back abs and back became a cycle of not wanting to sit up for long etc

So my abdominals really didn't get strong probably in the normal order.

Also probably depends how long you've been sick and how easily you can just go back to sitting at a desk all day. So yeah, that's where I am now. When I was starting from a way better spot this was so much easier in the past when I worked up to a 40 min run in a about 2 months time.

Salsa two hours a week now. I'm about to try some other things to see if I find Zumba class interesting. I'm going to try hiking, but this time with a group to see if that's more interesting to my body as well.

Tried physio that was ass, **I plan to dance myself better instead. It's a lot more about what your body finds fulfilling and joyful than anything else.**

LST I'm not quite 75% recovered (I get large flares with hormone swings, currently under investigation) but I do get days where I feel "back to normal". **I started with literally just stretching and rolling out muscles. I gradually built this up to a few gentle pilates exercises while lying down, like pelvic tucks and side leg raises.** Over 6 months I built up to at home pilates sessions following a class and adapting it to my needs, and then a one-to-one pilates class. I also horse ride so gently built that in, literally started off in walk and only did 5mins, and gradually built from there, right up to full lessons at Advanced medium level dressage after a year. **Getting back to walking has been the hardest part, its taken 18 months, but this week I went on my first normal dog walk, with rest breaks, and I could have cried with happiness that I didn't crash afterwards.** The most important thing I found was always exercising within my limits and not pushing it. If I got PEM it set me back. It was about going "this feels great, let's call it a day" when I didn't feel ready to stop. Not everyone will recover like I have, certainly access to horse riding and pilates is a huge privilege, but recovery for some is possible.

Lbt Completely agree it's about doing what you love, riding has always been my life so was obviously the first thing I wanted to do when I could. I can totally get why people hate pilates/yoga etc too but with my EDS I find it those gentle movements really help with my mind body connection and also pain levels, which in turn helps the riding. It's really about prioritising what matters to you but doing it in a way which doesn't cause a flare. **Totally agree walking is actually one of the hardest things to tackle, especially if you struggle with POTS. I was happily cantering my horse around the arena long before I could walk over 500m!**

JBM I had a period of significant recovery for a year or so and then relapsed. **I best tolerated activity that didn't get my heart rate going too high -for example, I could walk or hike (taking hill climbs slowly) but I couldn't jog. It was easier to tolerate strength exercises.** I believe I relapsed because I took on too much work, thinking I was ok since I wasn't getting tired, but in retrospect I should have included a lot more rest each day.

LL What does recovered mean to you? With strict pacing and IVIG treatment for my autoimmune SFN I was able to stop crashing, haven't crashed in a year and a half. I still consider myself disabled. I'm not going to the gym or running marathons. But I can for example do 6 hours of physical work and not crash. I can shovel snow for about half an hour and be fine. I still don't want to ruin my progress though, so I stay below a certain level of activity. I can work 4 hours a day. My POTS is the only thing that hasn't improved, so I struggle with that still. Getting my sleep in order also helped greatly, with sleep meds and I need 9-10 hours of sleep at night.

Recovery from CFS: Fifty Personal Stories by Alexandra Barton

Rita (from 50 Personal Stories)

Her own words: In February 1985, my doctor referred me to a different type of consultant. This consultant took my symptoms much more seriously. He diagnosed me with CFS and added that the condition was a relatively new phenomenon. His last words to me were that my chances of full recovery and getting back to work were minimal.

It was Christmas when I came across an article that described how gentle 'ultra slow' motion stretching exercises could stimulate weak muscles to 'wake up'. I devised my own set of ultra-slow-motion exercises and did them while lying on the floor of my living room every night. After two or three weeks, I was able to increase these to twice a day before doing them standing up. After a few weeks, I began taking short walks outside, building up by a few yards each day. By the spring, my walks had increased to one or two miles, three or four days a week.

Progress was slow but positive. However, I was very depressed, had lost every bit of confidence, lost what few friends I had, and felt terribly isolated. So when I spotted an advert in the local paper asking for someone to walk a dog for an hour a day, I had a strong feeling that this could be the way to make further progress.

That's how it worked out. Over a period of about six months, the one-hour walk gradually built up to two hours. I could feel my strength returning. After about nine months, it was the whole afternoon, five days a week, much to the delight of the dog owner.

Maureen (from 50 Personal Stories)

Her own words: Dr. Teitelbaum is a doctor in Maryland who has had great success treating CFS sufferers and who himself had CFS as a medical student. He was the first doctor who had done blood tests and I finally felt like someone was taking me seriously. When my test came back it showed many of the systems that controlled my body were out of balance, including my adrenal gland and thyroid. I went on Dr. Teitelbaum's regime of diet, vitamins, and herbs, and some pharmaceutical medicines. The first couple of months were hard and I almost gave up. But slowly the fog started to lift. Each day, I would go to the beach and walk as far as I could. At first, it was only ten feet. Soon it was more. Then I was walking fast. Next, I was running. I now have more sustainable energy than I ever did before my experience with CFS, and my life has been better than it ever was before. *Maureen also did acupuncture, meditation, and rolfing (connective tissue manipulation).*

Robert (from 50 Personal Stories)

Summary: Robert was 13 when he began struggling with post-viral fatigue. He struggled for years, and by the time he enrolled in college he was in a wheelchair and too weak to even write out his school assignments. After several tries with various physiotherapists, one named Kathy was more effective in helping Robert. She worked very gently with Robert for over a year, and he felt strong enough to write again, he was more light tolerant, and his headaches began to recede. Then, Kathy had Robert stand up on some crutches she brought him. He would stand and then rest and then try it again. Then he moved to stepping forward and backwards on the crutches. He did this for a week, and then moved to walking independently with a walking stick. Soon he was able to walk to the garden and climb the stairs. Two years later, Robert was leading an almost normal life. That summer, he and his family climbed Hay Tor in Dartmoor, which is

437 meters high. Robert recovered fully enough that he was able to work as a laborer on a building site. He said he was carrying bricks and bags of cement and breaking concrete up all day five days a week. He suffered no ill effects from this. Interestingly, he said that his most useful aid to recovering was taking half-hour rests in bed with no electronics distracting him. He graduated from college and now works as an architect.

Lizzie (from 50 Personal Stories)

Her own words: I had been reduced from a fit and healthy girl who used to go to two-hour dancing lessons on a Saturday afternoon to a CFS sufferer who could walk no more than about 25 meters without enduring extreme fatigue. Though it was six months of true trepidation as I literally found my feet again, my progress to fitness was steady. **I began with walking a little way, then resorting to my wheelchair, and gradually the distances lengthened.** *Lizzie reported this as her main formula, "Total rest, then slowly increase activity."*

In April 1990 it took five minutes at worst to go up a flight of stairs holding on with two hands. I made a decision that before the end of summer I would get to the top of North Berwick Law Hill, which is five hundred feet up. At that time, I could walk 300 yards on the level. I paced myself, so if it was a good day, I would follow the same route but extend it by 15 or 20 yards. If it was a really bad day, and I was decompensated I didn't even try to go out. **Before the end of July 1990, my eldest daughter and I went with a camera, and she took a picture of me at the top of North Berwick Law Hill.** Graded exercise and cognitive therapy got me back to 70 percent of my physical and mental level.

Alex (from 50 Personal Stories)

His own words: I spent countless hours in meditation and practicing yoga., and **as my health slowly returned I started to go for longer and longer walks along Swansea Bay, dragging my frail body with unstoppable determination a few steps further each time.**

Another six months later and I had made a full recovery. Like most people who are seriously ill, I had a benchmark that once I reached I knew I had made it. For me, this was being able to go for a run with no ill effects afterwards. This was something I had dreamed about doing for seven years, and to say it was an amazing feeling is perhaps the biggest understatement ever.

- Alex Howard wrote a book about his recovery experiences and now treats people with ME/CFS in his clinic. He says he has helped over one thousand people.

Paul (from 50 Personal Stories)

His own words: (After being diagnosed with ME, his doctor prescribed an antidepressant and shared a plan for graduated exercise.) At first I thought he was mad, some days I could barely stand, "So, how can I take exercise." By this time, I had been encouraged by my parents to come and stay with them at their bungalow, rather than be cooped up at my dingy flat – and how right they were. The better surroundings and being able to sit outside in their garden seemed to help my condition, and it was from there that I began a daily walking schedule. **On day 1, I could only walk slowly for about 300 meters, but slowly and surely each day I went further and further. The illness backed off, and my confidence and fitness improved, and after three weeks I could walk for about an hour!**

It was a combination of the tablets, the stay at my parents, and the exercise that somehow things fell in place for the better. I was able to return to work, move back home, and begin to live a relatively normal life again. Things had improved, but I still had the illness, and still got bad days and had to make a firm adjustment to my life. I had to be realistic about what I could and couldn't do and take life slower and pace myself.

That was six years ago, and I have been well ever since. As far as exercise goes, I'm able to run again. I recently ran the Great South Run, which I feel is an amazing comeback.

Raelan Agle - YouTube presenter who fully recovered from ME/CFS. She has interviewed over two hundred people who have recovered on her channel. In her own recovery journey, **she started exercising with gentle**

movements and walking, moved on to weightlifting, and finally progressed to combining walking and jogging for 30-minute periods.

Here is the link to two of her videos on her personal approach to exercise.

[Q&A: Is Exercising Bad For Someone With Chronic Fatigue Syndrome?](#)

[CFS Recovery - How I Started Running Again](#)