

Free Yourself from Fatigue

Despite the fact that modern technology makes daily life less physically taxing than ever, doctors say that more people than ever complain of fatigue. How can you break out of the web or unrelenting fatigue?

First, ask yourself why you're tired. Fatigue brought on by physical causes is generally worse in the evening and is typically relieved by sleep. Emotional fatigue is the opposite: It's usually worse in the morning and lets up toward evening.

Possible physical causes of fatigue include:

1. •Chronic fatigue syndrome. The fatigue lasts six or more months.
2. •Poor eating or sleeping habits.
3. •An imbalance in blood levels of electrolytes (sodium, potassium, and other minerals).
4. •Living or working in hot, humid conditions.
5. •Anemia.
6. •Prolonged effects of the flu or a bad cold.
7. •Other underlying infectious diseases, such as mononucleosis or Epstein-Barr virus.
8. •A number of disorders, such as low thyroid, multiple sclerosis, etc.

Possible emotional causes include:

1. •Burnout (wearing yourself out by trying to do too much).
2. •Boredom (extreme monotony or lack of interest in daily routines).
3. •Change (facing a major life crisis like divorce or retirement).
4. •Depression, anxiety.

Depending on the reasons for your fatigue, the following strategies may help restore your energy levels.

Eat Well.

Both extreme overeating and crash dieting can tax the body and lead to exhaustion. Skipping breakfast or indulging in rich, sugary snacks are practically guaranteed to leave some people pooped. On the other hand, iron-rich foods, whole grain breads and cereals, and raw fruits and vegetables contain the nutrients your body needs to maintain your energy level. It may help to eat 5 to 6 light meals a day, instead of 3 large ones.

Get regular physical activity.

Exercise can give you more energy, especially if you work at a sedentary job. Exercise can also calm you. If you're feeling sluggish, try taking a brisk walk in the fresh air. It can renew your energy instantly.

Cool off.

Working or playing in hot weather can drag you down. So can living or working in a warm, poorly ventilated environment. Rest in a cool, dry place as often as you can, drink plenty of liquids, and open a window.

Other, more specific tips for dealing with possible physical causes for fatigue are covered in [chapter 2, Major Medical Conditions: Prevention, Detection, and Treatment](#).

Rest and relax.

You don't need a book to tell you that if you haven't been sleeping too well, getting a good night's sleep (or two) can put the spring back in your stride. But did you know that daily relaxation breaks can also restore your energy? Schedule your work to allow relaxation breaks, then practice deep breathing or meditation. (Various relaxation techniques are described in detail in [chapter 6, Success over Stress](#).)

Change your routine.

Nothing makes you feel stale faster than a repetitive, predictable routine. So try to do something novel and interesting once a day (or more). If, on the other hand, you're on the go too much, set aside some time for peace and quiet. (Other, more specific tips for dealing with burnout, boredom, change, and depression appear in [chapter 6, Success over Stress](#).)

If you suffer unrelenting or unexplainable fatigue for more than two weeks, see your doctor. Any one of dozens of medical conditions may be the cause.