This introductory Factsheet provides an overview of managing fatigue.

**Introduction**

**Understanding and managing fatigue**

We all experience tiredness at times, which can be relieved by sleep and rest. Fatigue is when the tiredness is often overwhelming and isn't relieved by sleep and rest.

Fatigue can make it hard to get out of bed in the morning and prevent a person from fulfilling their daily tasks.

Most of the time fatigue can be traced to one or more of our habits or routines, particularly lack of exercise. It's also commonly related to depression. On occasion, fatigue is a symptom of other underlying conditions that require medical treatment.

**What are the benefits?**

The benefits of being able to take control of fatigue include better mental health, less stress, greater personal control and job performance/satisfaction, and of course more vitality and zest for life.

**How do we do it?**

Being self-aware and taking an honest look at the things that might be responsible for your fatigue is often the first step toward relief. Look for any destructive lifestyle cycles you are in. Ask yourself, is this fatigue, anxiety, over-worrying or something else?

Physical and mental fatigue are different, but they often occur together. Repeated physical exhaustion can lead to mental fatigue over time.

Physical fatigue is our inability to maintain optimal physical performance and is made worst with intense physical exercise. A person with physical fatigue may find it physically hard to do the things they usually do, such as climbing the stairs. Symptoms include muscle weakness, weariness, sleepiness or irritability and medical diagnosis may involve completing a strength test.

With mental fatigue, a person may find it harder to concentrate on things and stay focused. They may feel sleepy or have difficulty staying awake while working. This decrease in maximal cognitive performance often results from long periods of cognitive activity.

A study suggested that tough mental tasks can cause people to tire more quickly at physical exercise.

Either can be chronic or acute.

Burnout is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when you feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to meet constant demands. As the stress continues, you begin to lose the interest and motivation that led you to take on a certain role in the first place.

There are numerous causes such as overuse of alcohol or drugs such as antidepressants, under or over exercising, jet lag, poor sleeping patterns, boredom, grief, bad eating habits and being over-weight.

These are just a few of the medical conditions that can cause fatigue, if in any doubt see your doctor: acute liver failure, anaemia, anxiety disorders, cancer, chronic infections or inflammation (malaria etc.), chronic kidney disease, concussion, COPD, coronavirus, severe depression etc.

The symptoms include muscle fatigue due to electrolyte imbalance, lack of motivation, daytime drowsiness, tension headache, difficulty concentrating, gastrointestinal problems, irritability/mood swings, moodiness, slow response time, more accident prone, vision problems such as blurred vision.

If you experience any of the following it is advisable to make an appointment to see your doctor:

* You can’t think of anything that is causing it
* You have a high temperature
* You have unexplained weight loss
* Trouble falling or staying asleep when you’ve tried good sleep hygiene
* You believe you are depressed, feelings of self-harm or harming another
* Vomiting blood or rectal bleeding
* Severe headache
* Chest pain, irregular heartbeat or short of breath
* Feeling faint
* Pain in your abdomen, back or pelvis

Lifestyle strategies we can all use include: good cognitive hygiene such as developing a personal life vision/mission, using positive self-talk and visualisation, setting SMARTER goals, saying no, avoiding perfectionism and developing a plan to control your fatigue. A good healthy diet, increasing water intake, reducing exposure to toxins, regular exercise and relaxation (maybe try meditation or something like Yoga) are great life choices to make. Reducing stress and caffeine are also advisable. As well as good cognitive hygiene, practice good emotional hygiene by practising daily positive emotions, taking control of negative emotions and replacing them with positive emotions and facing and dealing with any past emotional trauma.

**Summary**

Don’t just accept fatigue, if you experience any of the symptoms identified above or have any concerns that there could be a medical reason for your fatigue then seek help.

Set yourself a 30-day lifestyle improvement plan and after 30-days review your progress and success.

**Further information**

Our facebook group has videos about emotional control and EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/216645969611627>