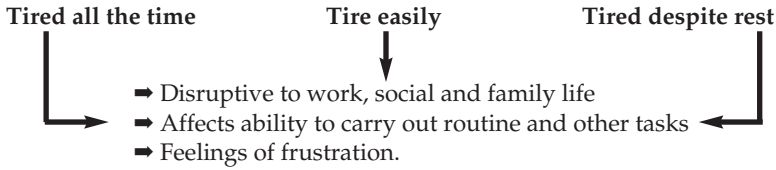


# Chronic tiredness

## Common symptoms

*Compared with previous level of energy, and compared with people known to you:*



Chronic fatigue syndrome is a much rarer condition, diagnosed when substantial physical and mental fatigue lasts longer than six months and there are no significant findings on physical or laboratory investigation.

## Common triggers

### Psychological triggers:

- ⇒ Depression
- ⇒ Stress
- ⇒ Worry
- ⇒ Anxiety.
- ⇒ Doing too much activity
- ⇒ Doing too little activity.

### Physical triggers:

- ⇒ Anaemia
- ⇒ Bronchitis
- ⇒ Asthma
- ⇒ Diabetes
- ⇒ Arthritis.
- ⇒ Thyroid disorder
- ⇒ Influenza
- ⇒ Alcohol/drug use
- ⇒ Bacterial, viral and other infections.

### Medication:

- ⇒ Steroids
- ⇒ Antihistamines.

## What treatments can help?

*Both therapies are most often needed:*

### Supportive therapy for:

- ⇒ depression
- ⇒ worry/anxiety
- ⇒ stress/life problems
- ⇒ lifestyle change
- ⇒ level of physical activity.

### Medication:

- ⇒ for other mental or physical disorders
- ⇒ anti-depressants are sometimes useful
- ⇒ there are no effective medications specific to fatigue and the main treatment follows psychological lines.

## Chronic tiredness

### Behavioural strategies

- ➔ Examine how well you are sleeping.
- ➔ Have a brief rest period of about two weeks, in which there are no extensive activities.
- ➔ After the period of brief rest, gradually return to your usual activities.
- ➔ Plan pleasant/enjoyable activities into your week.
- ➔ Gradually build up a regular exercise routine.
- ➔ Do not push yourself too hard; remember to build up all activities gradually and steadily.
- ➔ Try to have regular meals during the day.
- ➔ Try to keep to a healthy diet.
- ➔ Use relaxation techniques, for example, slow breathing.

### Slow breathing for relaxation

- ➔ Breathe in for three seconds
- ➔ Breathe out for three seconds
- ➔ Pause for three seconds before breathing in again
- ➔ Practise for 10 minutes at night (five minutes is better than nothing).

### Increase level of physical activity

A little activity  
one or two times a week  
(eg walking)



Inactive

Daily activities —  
not much effort  
(eg fast walking,  
shopping, cleaning)



Some activity

Activity that makes  
you out of breath for  
20 minutes or more,  
three to five times a week  
(eg jogging)



Active