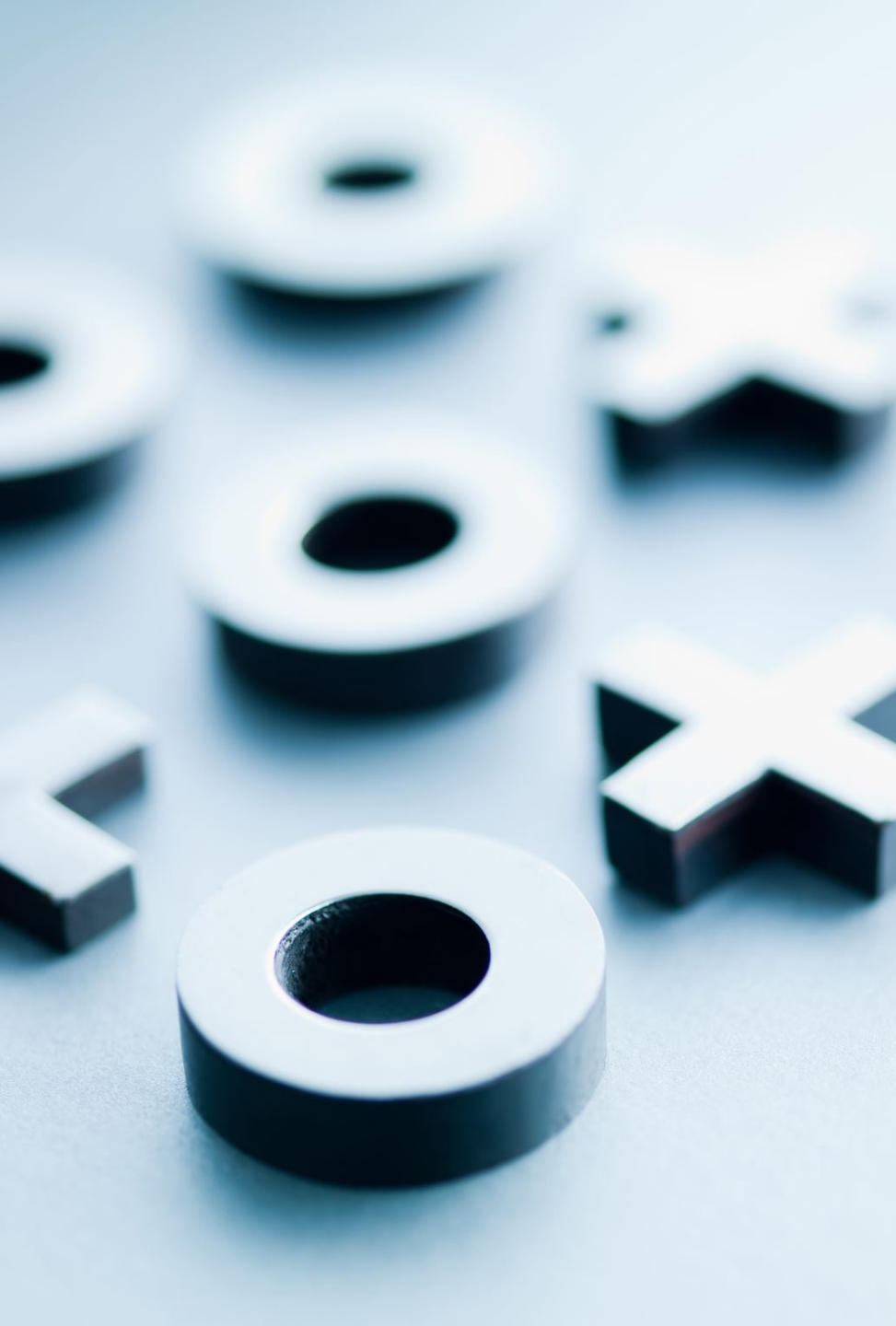




**Neuro Café:
1st December 2021
Ways to manage fatigue**



“In those first few months especially, I didn’t realise the difference between physical and mental fatigue. However, with time, I eventually learnt to treat my brain as a battery – with some things draining it quicker than others.”

Three P's

- Three strategies for Pacing are the 'Three P's':
 - P- **Plan** your activity in advance
 - P- **Prioritise** your tasks for the day, think - do these tasks all have to be done today?
 - P- **Pace** – always remember to break down your activity by having regular rest periods. Remember 'little and often'.

Planning

- Choose the best time of day for the activity
- Make a list or keep a diary
- Break a job down into stages and work out what is needed for the job. Some times doing things a little and often can be more effective than trying to do a task in one go.
- Think through each task- what are the basic activities involved ? For example – will you be sitting or standing or walking
- Plan ahead, organise tasks and distribute heavier activities throughout the week. Balance heavy activities (such as heavy shopping, gardening, washing windows) with light activities (such as dusting, light weeding, buying a few items from a shop).
- Organise the timing of activities to avoid unnecessary trips, for example limit the need to go up and down stairs.

Pacing

- Don't cram your day – spread your tasks throughout the day, and throughout the week if you can
- Allow yourself regular rest breaks and lie down if you need to
- Stop before you become overtired
- Adjust your list of things to do if you need to
- Do half today and half tomorrow
- Alternate active tasks such as shopping and cleaning with quiet tasks such as reading post
- Avoid rushing



Pacing

- **Pacing** is a positive way of how to maximise your energy with daily tasks.
- **Pacing** means spreading out activity and alternating it with rest periods so that you are able to continue for longer.
- **Pacing** is not about doing less activity, but spreading tasks out so that you can complete them more effectively.

Prioritising

- Question whether everything needs to be done today- can some tasks wait until tomorrow ?
- Question whether you actually need to do something- is it necessary ?
- Check whether you can get someone to help you
- Don't commit yourself to things that are unmanageable
- Set yourself realistic and achievable goals
- Aim to complete the activities which are most important and satisfying to you.

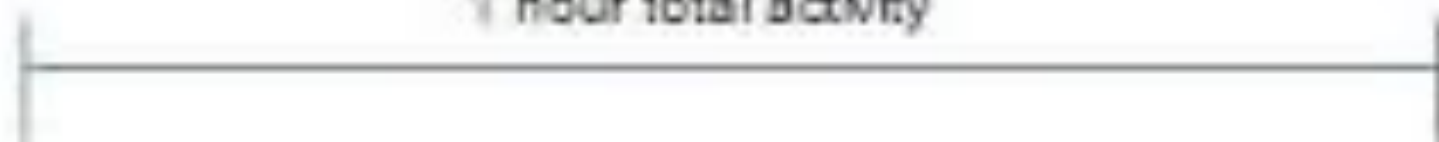


One hour of cleaning
the house including
vacuuming, dusting and
ironing



Increased pain—
have to rest for rest
of day

1 hour total activity



20
minutes
dusting

Rest

20
minutes
vacuuming

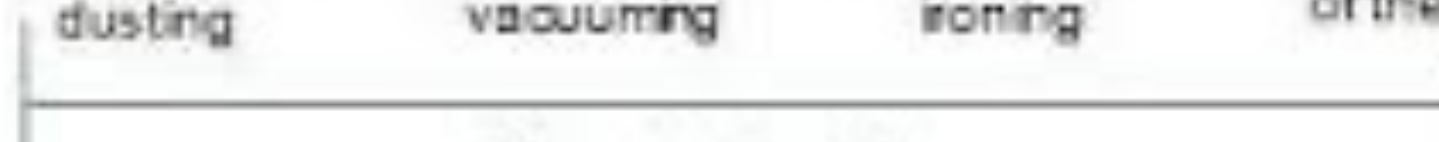
Rest

20
minutes
ironing



No increase
in pain—able
to do more
with the rest
of the day

1 hour total activity






What is meant by a rest period?

- Good quality rest periods is essential in being able to pace.
- Everyone is different, so the amount of rest time will depend on the individual.
- Some people have a short 10 minute break whereas others require 30 minutes.
- There is no right and wrong answer, it is about finding out what works for you.



4-7-8 breathing technique

 2023

This breathing technique can aid relaxation and sleep. Start by sitting or lying in a comfortable position.



```
graph LR; A((Breathe in through your nose  
4 seconds)) --> B((Hold your breath  
7 seconds)); B --> C((Breathe out through your mouth  
8 seconds));
```

Repeat technique 4 times

Please note: If you're not used to this breathing technique, it can make you feel light-headed, so don't practice this whilst driving. If you feel light-headed, try halving the time and build up to 4-7-8.

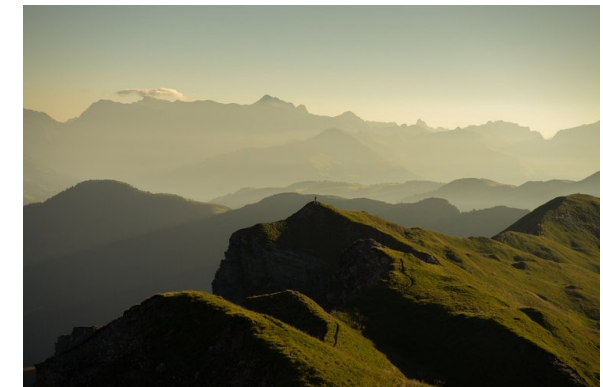
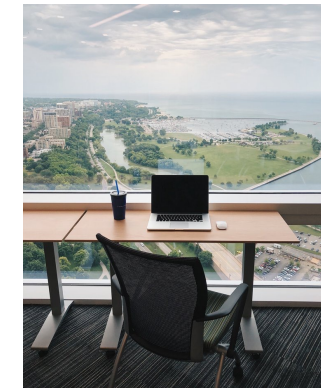


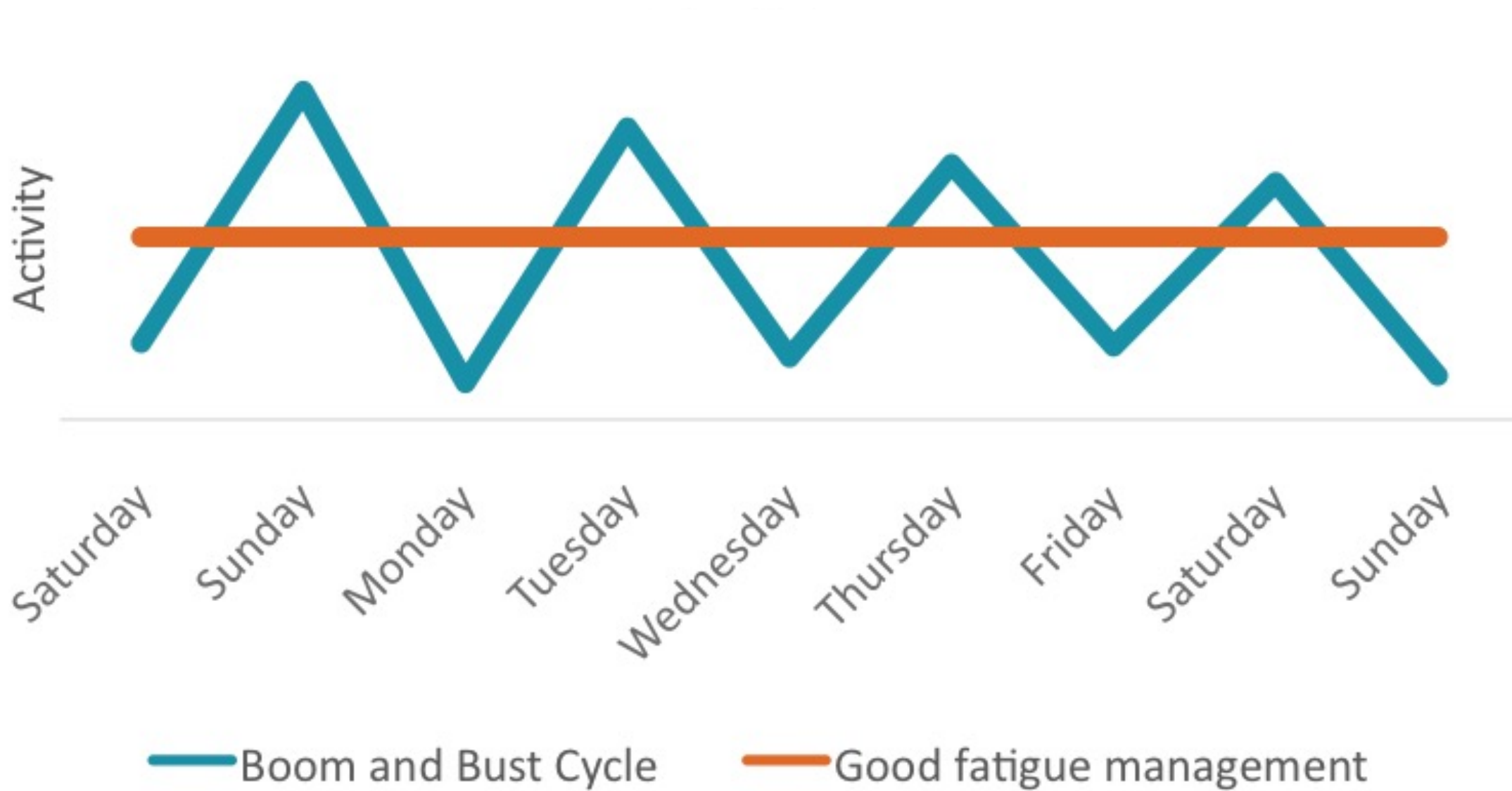
Examples of rest

The 7 types of “rest”

1. Physical rest- *Passive rest through sleep or active rest through restorative activities like yoga, massage, or stretching.*
2. Mental rest - *Schedule short breaks through out your day — every two hours and just slow down.*
3. Sensory rest - *Close your eyes, unplug your devices*
4. Creative rest - *Enjoying nature, arts, creating awe-inspiring experiences*
5. Emotional rest- *Having the time and space to freely express your feelings*
6. Social rest- *surround yourself with more positive and supportive people.*
7. Spiritual rest- *ability to connect beyond the physical and mental*

<http://parkinsonsecrets.com/blog/2021/11/30/i949zfs2filujyk1ecaavzu18yyg3o>





How to break boom and bust cycle



STAMINA BUILDER

EMERGENCY WORKOUT @ darebee.com

- 3min high knees
- 3min calf raises
- 3min wall sit
- 3min plank
- 3min squats
- 3min seated arm hold



How could you pace washing and dressing in the morning ?



The Spoon Theory

DYSAUTONOMIA INTERNATIONAL



The Spoon Theory is a creative way to explain to healthy friends and family what it's like living with a chronic illness. Dysautonomia patients often have limited energy, represented by spoons. Doing too much in one day can leave you short on spoons the next day.

If you only had 12 spoons per day, how would you use them? Take away 1 spoon if you didn't sleep well last night, forgot to take your meds, or skipped a meal. Take away 4 spoons if you have a cold.



get out of bed



get dressed



take pills



watch TV



bathe



style hair



surf the internet



read/study



make & eat a meal



make plans & socialize



light housework



drive somewhere



go to work/school



go shopping



go to the doctor



exercise

The Spoon Theory was written by Christine Miserando,
which you can check out on her website www.butyoudontlooksick.com.

How many spoons did you use?





Mindfulness



Mindfulness Exercises

- **Focused attention:** This uses the object of our breath to focus attention, to anchor the mind and maintain awareness. Notice your mind starting to wander? Simply return to the breath.
- **Body scan:** This technique is designed to sync body and mind by performing a mental scan, from the top of the head to the end of your toes.
- **Noting:** Whether you are focusing on the breath or simply sitting in quiet, this technique involves specifically “noting” what’s distracting the mind, to the extent that we are so caught up in a thought or emotion that we’ve lost our awareness of the breath. We “note” the thought or feeling to restore awareness, create a bit of space, as a way of letting go, and to learn more about our thought patterns, tendencies, and conditioning.
- **Visualization:** This type of meditation invites you to picture something or someone in your mind — we are essentially replacing the breath with a mental image as the object of focus. By conjuring a specific visualization, we not only get to observe the mind, but we also get to focus on any physical sensations.

Mindfulness Exercises

- **Loving kindness:** We direct positive energy and goodwill first to ourselves, and then, as a ripple effect, to others, which helps us let go of unhappy feelings we may be experiencing.
- **Skilful compassion:** This involves focusing on a person you know or love and paying attention to the sensations arising from the heart. By opening our hearts and minds, we have the opportunity to foster a feeling of happiness in our own mind.
- **Resting awareness:** Rather than focusing on the breath or a visualization, this technique involves letting the mind truly rest; thoughts may enter, but instead of distracting you and pulling you away from the present moment, they simply drift away.
- **Reflection:** This technique invites you to ask yourself a question: perhaps something such as, “What are you most grateful for?” Be aware of the feelings, not the thoughts, that arise when you focus on the question.



Eat a healthy balanced diet

- Eating well will greatly benefit your general health and wellbeing. Try to include the following food groups in your diet everyday:
- Fruit and vegetables
- Starchy foods (wholegrain foods and high fibre cereals)
- Dairy or dairy alternatives (low fat cheeses, milk, yoghurt, soya)
- Proteins (meat, fish, eggs, tofu, beans, pulses, nuts)
- Small amounts of unsaturated fats
- It is also important to drink plenty of fluids to keep yourself hydrated.
- [Public Health England's Eatwell Guide](#) gives more information on what foods you should be eating everyday to stay healthy.

Organise tools, materials and work area (Ergonomics)

- Organise your work area, for example your kitchen, as closely as you can according to ergonomic principles.
- Good ventilation is important as heat can exacerbate fatigue.
- Have a specific area for each task, storing essential equipment there for immediate use. For example, designating a tea-making area with tea, cups and a kettle in place, or storing washing powder next to the washing machine.
- Keep your work areas as uncluttered as possible.
- The larger the grip, the easier the task will be.



Adopt a good posture

- Activities should be carried out in a relaxed and efficient way, minimising stress on your body, which will in turn save you energy.
- Try to maintain an upright and symmetrical posture during all tasks.
- Rest on a perching stool if necessary while carrying out tasks.
- Rest in order to reduce strain on your joints and soft tissue, i.e. sit in a high-back chair that supports you while carrying out a task, for example eating or using a computer.
- Avoid excessive twisting and bending.



Practice good sleep hygiene

- It's not just the quantity of sleep you have but also the quality.
- Have a rest or nap during the day if you need to, but try to keep it to 20-30mins.
- Try to stick to a regular night-time routine
- Don't stay up too late.
- Avoid eating heavy meals late in the evening if you can.
- If you are feeling fatigued it can be tempting to use caffeine or alcohol as a pick me up. However, too much caffeine or alcohol can actually disrupt sleep.



Tips from people who experience or experienced fatigue

- Below are some tips shared with us by people living with fatigue on what they find helps them to manage day to day.
- "Know when the fatigue is starting to affect you and immediately take action. It is critical to recognise the early signs."
- "Dealing with fatigue, one of the key things that helps is to have anticipatory rest, shut your eyes for 20mins."
- "Pacing myself is crucial and not attempting too many things in a day/week. Knowing when to rest is crucial too."
- "The best advice I can give is to be kind to yourself, to learn your triggers and know your limits, particularly if you experience post-exertion fatigue that might not really kick in until the following day. That said, I have found one of my coping strategies is not to be afraid of pushing myself a little each day, even if that is motivating myself to cook a meal, going out for a short walk or going to a 'do' with friends for an hour (rather than being out with everyone else for hours!). The rewards can be immense and help to keep things to look forward to."

The following are useful resources for people living with neurological fatigue and their families and carers:

- **The Brain Tumour Charity** – <https://www.thebraintumourcharity.org/understanding-brain-tumours/living-with-a-brain-tumour/side-effects/fatigue-and-brain-tumours/>
- **Macmillan** – <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/coping/side-effects-and-symptoms/tiredness>
- **Brain and Spine Foundation** – <https://www.brainandspine.org.uk/information-and-support/living-with-a-neurological-problem/fatigue/>
- **The Stroke Association** – [https://www.stroke.org.uk/sites/default/files/fatigue after stroke.pdf](https://www.stroke.org.uk/sites/default/files/fatigue%20after%20stroke.pdf)
- **MS Society** – www.mssociety.org.uk
- **MS Trust** – www.mstrust.org.uk