

Fatigue



What is it?

There are two types of fatigue:

Physical fatigue

- ▶ Feeling low in energy, your body may feel heavy and you may feel like you have lost a lot of strength.
- ▶ Even small tasks, like walking to the bathroom, might take up a lot of energy.

Mental/cognitive fatigue

- ▶ Your brain might feel foggy or cloudy, with even simple tasks feeling exhausting or difficult.
- ▶ You might find it hard to concentrate and focus on work tasks.

Fatigue can be experienced by people living with long-term conditions and is often experienced by people who have had a serious illness or been infected by a virus such as COVID-19.

This type of fatigue is different from the normal feeling of tiredness you get after doing a lot of work or exercise. It is also different from the tiredness you can feel when you are depressed and lacking motivation to do things.

Fatigue can occur even when you are rested and have had a good night's sleep. It can also occur after minimal effort and leave you feeling dull and finding it difficult to concentrate.

What can I do about fatigue?

- ▶ Recognise and accept that your fatigue is real and be kind to yourself. Explain to your whānau and colleagues at work the impact your fatigue is having.
- ▶ Get a good night's sleep. Fatigue feels much worse if your sleep pattern is disturbed.
- ▶ Plan each day in advance and prioritise what's important to you. Delegate tasks to others or think of ways you can do things differently to save energy, such as online shopping for groceries. If you get stuck, try problem solving.
- ▶ Most importantly – pace yourself and avoid a 'boom or bust' approach to activity.



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► Pacing yourself.

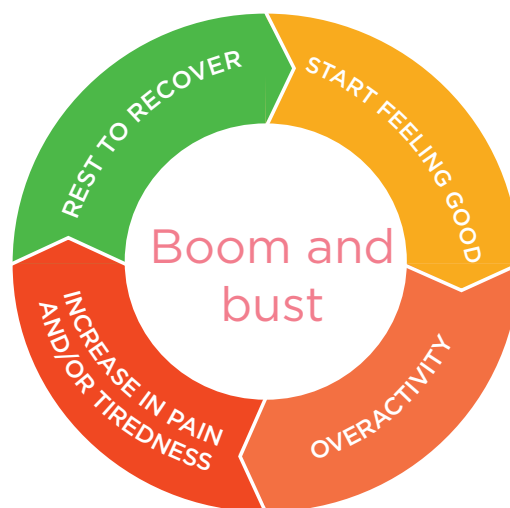
Pacing involves spreading your tasks evenly to avoid doing too much in one day.

Avoid falling into the overactivity/rest trap. You might think of this as boom and bust, or crashing after too much activity.

This is when one day you do much more than usual and the next day you feel exhausted. It can take a few days to recover and you end up feeling weaker than you did before.

The key thing is to pace yourself and do small amounts of different activities and rest in between.

- Keeping a symptom diary can help you keep track of how different activities affect you.
- Think about your overall wellbeing. Try the 5 ways to wellbeing and the relaxation and breathing techniques.
- Use the activity diary to build some of these into your week.
- Think about your mood, if you have feelings of sadness, anxiety or hopelessness as well as fatigue you may want to talk to a doctor or nurse.
- Keep active but remember to build up slowly to avoid falling into the boom and bust trap.
- Eat well, a healthy diet including a wide range of fruits, vegetables and protein can help. Keeping a food diary can help you keep track.



Sometimes, doing too much too quickly stops you from achieving your long-term goals. Be prepared and think ahead, things can get in the way.

