

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome / Fibromyalgia Lifestyle Tips

1. LIFESTYLE

Rest is best. Most patients report that rest is the best therapy. You must restructure your life so that it is possible to stop what you are doing when your body tells you to stop.

Restructuring can be a difficult task, but patients report that it is ultimately a rewarding lesson that many enjoy sharing with others.

Adjust your daily schedule to accommodate your body rhythm. Some patients feel best retiring late and sleeping late. However, it is best to get into the habit of an earlier bedtime, perhaps between 9 and 10 p.m., and get the body used to a healthier rhythm.

Follow a fixed schedule of retiring and arising at the same time each day.

Each day you have a finite amount of energy available. Trial and error will help you fine-tune that inner sense of how much energy you have each day and when you must stop.

You will feel and do your best by pushing *almost* to the limit of your daily energy allowance. At the least, get up, bathe, and dress each morning. Don't regularly exceed your daily energy allowance, or you will risk relapse.

Lying down and resting can contribute extra energy toward your daily limit.

Mental strain and emotional stress sap energy and lower your daily energy allowance.

Save your energy for important things! For example, hire others to do housework and yard work, if financially feasible. Get a cordless telephone and an answering machine.

2. EXERCISE

Exercise may benefit your mood and improve your coping skills. Daily exercise of some kind is essential to prevent deconditioning, and it may enhance your immune system. However, do not exercise so much that you exceed your daily energy limit or risk relapse.

Get up, bathe, and dress each day. If you are able to, embark on a walking program. Begin with just a minute or two daily, then try 5 minutes, then 7 minutes, and so on.

Soon you may wish to try bicycling, swimming, and—later on, as you are able—low-impact aerobics. Additionally, resistance exercises with light weights can help to improve muscle tone and increase your endurance.