



Fatigue Take Control Part 2

>>**Speaker:** Making proactive energy choices is an integral part in managing fatigue. Deciding what is important to you, planning your day, and keeping an activity diary are the first steps of taking control of your fatigue.

>>**Speaker:** I wish I knew how my fatigue was going to vary off and on. Some days I'm just really tired and I have no clue why.

>>**Speaker:** Many people feel that their life is out of control because of fatigue, that they can't predict whether they'll feel good on Wednesday or feel good on Tuesday night when somebody wants them to do something. Setting priorities really helps people decide what's important to me. What do I want to do with my life? What do I want to do with my limited amount of energy? If you plan what you're doing and you set aside that time, then you'll know when that activity comes along, you're ready to do it.

>>**Speaker:** There are certain priorities in how I spend my energy. I'd say my family is a primary activity. I sometimes work part-time, and that has to be a priority, because they do want you to come to work. And I do allow leisure time. I mean, that has to be part of my life, just time to sit and visit with friends. It's just a matter of looking at what's the most important thing, and making sure there is time for those things.

>>**Speaker:** My family is my first priority. They come before anything, and my family also, they understand how much coaching, how important it is to me and how it helps me throughout the day; how it changed my whole perspective of having MS and how it pushes me every day.

>>**Speaker:** For people who have made choices and who are setting priorities, they are using their energy on things that are important to them. And even though they might not be doing as many activities, we often hear

them say, "I'm happy with what I'm doing now. My life is rich, my life is full of things that are important to me."

>>**Speaker:** Several years ago, when I first was introduced to the Multiple Sclerosis Center at OHSU, I got a new doctor and she put me right with a therapist. And I thought, oh, this is dumb. I don't want to go. You know, I know how to move and walk and all that. The woman, she talked to me and talked about what I did during the day, and when was my worst time for fatigue? And I just thought, oh, all the time. But she asked me to put together a diary. I said, "That's dumb."

And then my next appointment she asked me, "Did I do one?" And I said, "No." And she encouraged me to do that. So, I said, "Okay, I'll try it." And I did. I looked at how I felt different times of the day, and when it changed I wrote it down. I kept the diary for a few weeks, actually, and when I went back and read it, I realized there was a pattern in my notes, when my peak time for getting stuff done was, and when I was just too tired to move.

So, I looked at that and I started planning my calendar of my day based on the times when I had a lot of energy. And I realized it worked for me. It worked for me, and I never thought that something as simple as keeping track of how I felt during the day would make that much difference.

>>**Speaker:** An activity diary is a very useful tool, and generally I ask people to keep an activity diary for three to four days in a row and during periods where they're doing regular activities. So, if you work, trying to get at least one or two days of activity diary of working activities and maybe one or two diary days of things that you're doing at home. We all have habits, we all have ways that we've done things, and we tend to just go on doing them. And the activity diary brings them to consciousness, makes you aware of what you're doing.

>>**Speaker:** I've never recognized that there was such a pattern, and I would keep pushing and pushing. It didn't matter how tired I was. Sometimes I'd walk in my house after a day of work and I was just ready to collapse. But as soon as I changed to look at my peak times and tired times, now during my fatigue times, if I'm at work, that's when I answer phone calls, that's when I do my writing stuff, that's when I do reading that I have to do, or any paperwork that doesn't take a lot of energy.

And my peak periods I can go and have meetings, I can do projects with other people I work with, and it made a world of difference, it really did. I think I doubled my productivity when I discovered when was the best time for me to move.

>>**Speaker:** The fatigue level and looking at the activity diary is really the crucial piece of information that we're looking at. And although people know, for instance, that I'm usually more tired in the afternoon than I am in the morning, they often don't really know the finer points of how that fatigue is varying during the day. So, if you can see, a-ha, I walked a long distance here, my fatigue level started going up, was up for several hours, you can start seeing the relationship between a particular activity or an environment. For instance, maybe a hot environment that you're regularly in, and that fatigue level going up with that environment. That gives you a clue as to something you might be able to change.