

## Fatigue Management

Monitoring and managing your cognitive battery is important, so that you are less likely to suddenly find yourself depleted entirely and so you can predict when the low battery is coming, what depletes you quickly and how to recharge quicker. Part of this process involves implementing the 4 Ps. This is a very personal experience, and while others can empathise, only you know how your fatigue feels and how it affects you. What works for one person, might not be what you need.

### The 4Ps are Key

#### Prioritise



**Prioritise your tasks** - you won't have time for everything. Managing your expectations and delegating tasks is important. Champion the small wins. This is where tracking and logging helps. You might not see the wins until later on. Recovery is not linear and you need your own evidence to see that the overall trajectory is upwards... even if you've gone through a few roundabouts and diversions on the way.

#### Plan



**Plan the tasks** - Learn what time of day you are more energised or constructive. Generally, we are more alert in the morning before we have become overloaded, but your day may begin at 6am or 10am. Naturally we lull around 3-4pm, but you may find there is another time of day that you learn to step back at. Planning in allows for 'tapering', where you pull back where possible on tasks in order to be at your best for an event or larger task, even the small ones. Break them down into smaller chunks.

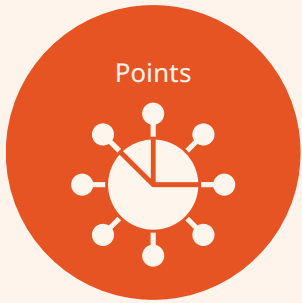
Appropriate and SMART goal setting is also important.

#### Pace



**Pace yourself** - Take regular breaks, try time blocking. 20 minutes is usually too long for a task.

## 4 Ps continued...



**Points-based system** - Assign points based on the complexity or novelty of a task. Win back points with recharge methods. For instance, travelling or attending an appointment might be as much as 10 points, but cooking a simple meal you are familiar with could be 3. You could claim back 3 points from a 30 minute recharge. Points will change as you become cognitively stronger and more able to integrate the Ps into your routines. I always suggest 20 points as a starting point.

By implementing these systems, you can create conscious awareness around patterns, behaviours and thoughts.

Take regular breaks, use the daily planner to timeblock. Assign tasks against a time and stop when the assigned time has elapsed. You will need to become aware of your optimal concentration period. Chunking tasks is one of the most efficient ways to complete tasks and goals.

It is important to maintain good nutrition and to engage in self care. It has such a positive impact on both mood and fatigue, but is often something we realise too late when the fog has descended.

**DON'T STOP WHEN YOU ARE TIRED, STOP BEFORE.**

### About Natalie

Natalie holds a BSc in Psychology and MSc in Cognitive Neuropsychology and is the author of "The Fatigue Management Journal". She has worked in the field of Neuro Rehabilitation for over 20 years. As a Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapist and Certified Brain Injury Trainer, she has worked with hundreds of families and clients who experienced a brain injury ranging from concussions to severe injuries. Natalie provides training to both her internal team and to other professionals, workplaces and educational settings.



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