

Resource

## Rheumatoid arthritis and fatigue

Fatigue is one of the most common and can be one of the most debilitating symptoms of RA. It is a level of tiredness which cannot always be eased through getting a good night's sleep, and it can have a major impact on day-to-day living.

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In an NRAS survey in 2014, 89% of rheumatoid arthritis patients surveyed said that they experienced fatigue, with 40% of those experiencing severe, persistent fatigue.

Yet, despite it being such a common and severe symptom, we often hear some worrying things about fatigue, such as healthcare professionals not giving it as much attention as other symptoms and

patients not knowing how best to manage their fatigue.

With this in mind, NRAS has created resources to help with fatigue, including our Fatigue Matters booklet and interactive fatigue diary.

Fatigue affects every aspect of your life. Pacing your activities can really help with fatigue management, but it's not always easy. It could involve making difficult decisions on prioritising of activities (including work) and how much to do each day and week, as well as whether to complete an activity or spread it out over several days, and this won't always come naturally to people. Keeping a diary of activity levels and fatigue levels can help you with pacing.

There are also many other strategies that can help, including a healthy diet, a good level of exercise and getting better control of your RA overall, through a combination of medication and self-management techniques.

There are many reasons why people with RA experience chronic fatigue (fatigue that is constant or long term). Research indicates that it is mainly the effects of having RA that can contribute to fatigue – notably, pain, low mood/poor mental health, disease activity, disability, inactivity, social isolation and of course poor sleep. Poor quality, restless sleep is common in people with RA and you may find that painful joints cause you to wake up as you move during the night.

## Fatigue matters

Fatigue can have a severe impact on the quality of life of those affected and it can come on at anytime without warning. We have created a self-help guide to explain what fatigue is, the causes and what you can do to tackle this symptom.



Read more

[Sleep](#)

Getting a good night's sleep can be tough, especially when you are suffering from the symptoms of RA. We hope that this article will help to give you some tips for getting a good night's sleep.

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