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Self-Care Strategies for Chronic Fatigue Syndrome: Improving Your Mental Health

Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) is a debilitating condition that can interfere with everyday activities. If you suffer from CFS, certain self-care strategies may help combat profound tiredness and other associated symptoms such as headaches, muscle pain, difficulty concentrating, mood swings, and depression. Self-care activities can be surprisingly effective at improving your mental health! In this article, [Living With Me](#) explores some effective self-care strategies that can help you feel your best in the face of CFS.

Embrace an Anti-Inflammatory Diet

According to Verywell Health, CFS is [believed to involve chronic inflammation](#). Adopting an anti-inflammatory diet could help to ease symptoms and correct underlying nutrient deficiencies. Look for ways to make simple swaps in your diet, like reaching for fruit and nuts instead of chips and soda [when you need a snack](#). Whole grains, vegetables, fruits, legumes, fish, and healthy

fats can give you an energy boost. On the other hand, foods with added sugar, inflammatory fats, alcohol, and caffeine can zap your energy, so stay away from those.

Exercise as Treatment

Regular exercise plays an incredibly important role in [mental and physical wellness](#). While exercising may not be the first thing you want to do when you're experiencing chronic fatigue, movement can actually help your body generate energy. Just be sure to pace yourself as you're starting out. Start with gentle movements and stretches. Yoga and Pilates are great if you're looking for classes or online videos to follow.

Practice Good Sleep Hygiene

While getting enough sleep is undeniably important for maintaining consistent energy levels, sleep can also give your mental health a boost. SleepFoundation.org explains that sleep [helps the brain process emotional information](#). Lack of sleep can influence mood and emotional reactivity and is closely tied to the severity of mental health disorders, including anxiety and depression. [Practice good sleep hygiene habits](#) to improve your sleep quality:

- Stick to a regular sleep pattern.
- Go to bed when you feel tired.
- If you can't sleep, get out of bed and read or listen to an audiobook.
- Avoid alcohol before bed.
- Keep electronics out of the bedroom.
- Engage in relaxing activities before bed.

Spend More Time Outside

[Spending time in the great outdoors](#) is one of the best things you can do for your mental health. Nature can calm a busy brain, reducing stress and restoring the ability to concentrate and pay attention. And since stress can worsen symptoms of CFS, stress reduction through time spent outdoors can perk up a tired brain. Spending time outside can also help reset your sleep cycle every day, making it easier to fall asleep at night and wake up in the morning. Plus, you'll soak up some beneficial vitamin D if you can get out in the sun!

Limit Daily Decision-Making

If you're facing CFS, the last thing you need is decision fatigue. Unfortunately, our hectic lives require us to make countless decisions every day, which can leave us feeling drained and depleted. Decision fatigue is [a state of mental overload](#). The more decisions you have to make in a day, the more difficult it becomes and the more it can wear on your brain. The easiest way to overcome this issue is [to streamline your choices](#). Make grocery lists, so you don't have to decide what to buy when you're at the store, pick out your clothes for work the night before, and

cut out things that aren't important. Don't waste valuable energy deciding what to watch or where to order your takeout from. Go with your gut and commit to a decision!

While many of these self-care tips may be basic or commonplace, they're important nonetheless. By making healthy eating choices, getting enough sleep, exercising regularly, and spending time outside, you can give your mental health a boost and make it a little easier to live with CFS!

For more tips on thriving in the face of CFS, check out the other posts on [Living With Me](#)!