

Managing MS: Keeping Active & Managing Fatigue

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Overview

- **Physiotherapy Assessment**
- **Movement & what is important**
- **Fatigue & energy management**
- **Exercise & activity**
- **Self-management strategies**
- **Accessing physiotherapy**

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Physiotherapy Assessment

Physiotherapy can help you:

- ✓ Maintain independence and everyday function
- ✓ Improve mobility, balance and confidence with movement
- ✓ Manage symptoms such as weakness, stiffness, pain and fatigue
- ✓ Prevent or minimise secondary problems caused by inactivity
- ✓ Stay active safely through tailored exercise and activity programmes
- ✓ Develop practical strategies to manage challenges at home, work and leisure
- ✓ Set meaningful goals and work towards what matters most to you
- ✓ Access advice, support and onward referrals when needed

Early physiotherapy can help you stay active, maintain function and adapt to changes over time.

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Movement depends on.....

- **Normal tone**
- **Strength**
- **Sensation**
- **Coordination**
- **Balance**
- **Posture**
- **Functioning musculoskeletal system**
- **Purpose**

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Fatigue

Fatigue in MS can affect:

- Physical activity
- Concentration
- Memory
- Mood
- Daily activities

Possible contributing factors:

- Changes within the nervous system
- Inflammation
- Reduced fitness (deconditioning)
- Poor sleep and energy management

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Energy Management

Work with your fatigue, not against it

Fatigue can affect physical activity, concentration, memory and decision-making

- Establish a **routine** and structure to reduce cognitive load
- **Plan** activities ahead of time and include regular rest breaks
- **Prioritise** essential tasks and spread activities across the week
- **Pace** yourself by breaking larger tasks into smaller, manageable steps
- Use support, equipment, and energy-saving strategies where helpful
- Consider sleep, relaxation and graded exercise as part of your routine
- Keep a fatigue diary to identify patterns and plan effectively

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Exercise & Activity Management

Find your baseline level of activity and progress gradually

✓ Increase time, repetitions, or intensity step by step

✓ Choose activities that match your goals:

- Strength
- Balance
- Fitness
- Mobility

✓ Exercise can be:

- Walking
- Gardening
- Housework
- Swimming
- Yoga / Pilates

✓ Focus on quality of movement and safe practice

✓ Avoid the "boom and bust" cycle of doing too much on good days

Take-home message: Consistent activity is more effective than occasional overexertion

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Self Management for Long Term Success

Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Stay active, pace yourself, and work within your limits.

Maintain regular activity to prevent deconditioning and secondary weakness.

Take-home message: A sustainable routine that balances activity and recovery helps maintain function and wellbeing.

Include a mix of:

- Stretching
- Strengthening
- Balance exercises
- Aerobic activity

- ✓ Use fatigue-management and pacing strategies
- ✓ Practice activities that are challenging but achievable
- ✓ Involve family and friends to support motivation and enjoyment
- ✓ Recognise your limitations and avoid pushing through significant pain or fatigue

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Accessing Physiotherapy

When to access?

- Newly Diagnosed with MS
- If experiencing a relapse
- If your ability to function within a role has changed or is becoming more difficult
- Following a fall or injury
- Following Botox injection (for tone management)
- If you need advice/review of your current regime

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Accessing Physiotherapy

Who to access?

- Neurological Outpatient Physiotherapy at RBH
- CBNRT – for input requiring one or more discipline (physio, OT, neuro-psychology, speech & language therapy)
- MS Therapy Centre (Reading) for on-going regular exercise groups and social support.
- MSK Physiotherapy (outpatients) – for pain/specific joint issues
- Domiciliary Physiotherapy - for general mobility/pain issues – if someone is unable to access a clinic

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Accessing Physiotherapy

How to access?

- Via GP
- Via MS Nurse
- Via Consultant

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Thank you



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