

# Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) / Myalgic Encephalopathy (ME) Physiotherapy



Irving Building  
Rehabilitation  
0161 206 1077

**Saving lives,  
Improving lives**

## What is Physiotherapy?

Physiotherapy is an important part of treatment for most people with CFS/ME. It's run by physiotherapists, who are part of a team of healthcare professionals who help you to resume or maintain an active and independent life both at home and work.

Your physiotherapist will start by asking questions about how CFS/ME is affecting you. This assessment will let them tailor the treatment to your needs.

Treatment may include:

- Setting SMART goals
- Gradual return to activity, including exercise, if appropriate
- Pacing techniques
- Advice on sleep and relaxation
- Work-based advice

## How can physiotherapy help?

### Understanding how CFS/ME affects you

A physiotherapist can help you to understand what is happening to your energy levels when you have CFS/ME. Understanding your CFS/ME will help you to manage the symptoms.

### Pace yourself

Overdoing and underdoing activity can increase your symptoms. Your physiotherapist can advise you on increasing your activity level at a rate you can cope with and on finding the right balance between rest and activity. Planning your activities so that you don't overdo it will let you to enjoy the things you want to do.

### Take regular exercise

Exercise starts slowly and increases in small steps. This will help you to strengthen your muscles and joints and increase your fitness. Improving your general fitness and stamina in a controlled way will help you to increase your activity level without increasing your fatigue.

## Treatments offered

Where possible, we aim to personalise all treatment and apply a goal orientated approach. Treatment options may include:

- Pacing / energy stewardship
- Sleep hygiene advice
- A personalised graduated activity plan
- A tailored exercise programme
- Return to work advice

## Improving your management

You might be worried that any increase in exercise or physical activity could make your condition worse. You may have tried using exercise to help yourself in the past and have found that it simply aggravated your symptoms.

Please be assured that CFS/ME Physiotherapy is not about suddenly adding a large amount of activity into your daily routine. Any CFS/ME Physiotherapy treatment programme will be structured around what you can do at the moment and then involve a guided, gradually progressive exercise programme.

Your physiotherapist will provide NHS-approved CFS/ME treatment. National guidance is followed and your treatments are planned according to the latest research evidence.

### Group work / transfer to CH psychology

For some people it may be appropriate to undertake group cognitive behavioural therapy within the psychology team. This can be arranged by your consultant or physiotherapist.

### Where can I get more information?

NICE guidance (currently under review, due December 2020).

### When do I start physiotherapy?

In order to arrange an initial appointment with one of our physiotherapists you will need to speak to the Diabetes & Endocrinology Centre reception. They will be able to book you in to our "ENDOCFP" diary in a full 40 minute "New Patient" slot.

**Booked Physiotherapy / New Patient Slot**

Date: .....

*To be completed by Diabetes & Endocrinology Centre reception*

If you do not want to access physiotherapy at this time, you can arrange an appointment at a later date by contacting the Diabetes & Endocrinology Centre and requesting an appointment with ENDOCFP - (you must have ongoing consultant appointments to do this)

If you have been discharged from the chronic fatigue service and want to access physiotherapy you will need to be re-referred to the chronic fatigue service by your GP.

### Pre-appointment information gathering

Prior to your first appointment it will be helpful to complete the tasks listed below:

Activity diary	Please complete a routine diary over the course of 2 weeks. Write down your sleep/wake times, your activities such as daily tasks, work, exercise, sitting, rest. This will allow you and your physiotherapist to gain an understanding of your routine.
Activities you find difficult	Please complete a list of activities that increase your fatigue. These may be day to day tasks, work or hobbies which are important to you.
Goals	Please consider any short term or long term goals that you want to achieve. These may be related to day to day tasks, work or hobbies which are important to you.

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Interpreters are available for both verbal and non-verbal (e.g. British Sign Language) languages, on request. Please contact the service/clinic you are visiting to request this.

**If you need this information leaflet translated, please telephone:**

Polish Jeżeli potrzebne jest Państwu to tłumaczenie, proszę zadzwonić pod numer.

Urdu اگر آپ کو اس ترجمانی کی ضرورت ہے تو مہربانی کر کے فون کریں۔

Arabic إذا كنتم بحاجة الى تفسير او ترجمة هذا الرجاء الاتصال

Chinese 如果需要翻译，请拨打电话

Farsi اگر به ترجمه این نیاز دارید ، لطفاً تلفن کنید

**0161 206 0224**

or Email: [@ InterpretationandTrans@srft.nhs.uk](mailto:InterpretationandTrans@srft.nhs.uk)

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