

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



Irving Building
Rehabilitation
0161 206 1077



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What is the role of Physiotherapy in CFS/ME? ?

CFS/ME Physiotherapy treatment is based around your current ability. All increases in activity will initially be monitored by a member of the physiotherapy CFS/ME team but with a long term goal of enabling you to independently progress on your own.

An inability to function at the same level as you did before can lead to frustration and an eventual lack of motivation for any physical activity.

This starts a vicious cycle of avoiding activity and increased fatigue which then results in a loss of physical function. The aim of CFS/ME Physiotherapy treatment is to break this cycle.

CFS/ME Physiotherapy treatment is **not** about “exercising away” your fatigue. Instead, it is about enabling you to make activity and rest consistent, rather than symptom dependent.

By doing this you will be able to gradually increase your ability to carry out everyday activities while slowly cutting down on excessive rest.

Will CFS/ME Physiotherapy do me harm?

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.

Boom and bust

CFS/ME can result in repeated episodes of over-exertion followed by increases in fatigue - often called boom and bust. On some days you may feel reasonably well and rush about trying to get through your ‘to do’ list (the boom time). The next day, or confusingly a couple of days later, you may feel overcome by CFS/ME symptoms (the bust time). This pattern may be better known to you as relapsing, crashing or having a setback.

It is important to limit all boom-bust lifestyle patterns before any new physical activity is started in a GET programme. You need to stabilise your daily routine by spreading physical activity and rest evenly throughout the day.



What to expect

A **temporary increase** in fatigue-associated symptoms is usual when you begin to carry out a change in activity levels.

These increases in fatigue do not mean that your CFS/ME is getting worse, or that you are damaging yourself. It is just that your body will take time to get used to any new pattern of increased activity.

Your physiotherapist will work with you to help you identify your current physical activity level. This will involve a detailed discussion about your current day-to-day routine, and you may be asked to monitor your daily step count by using a pedometer, over a number of weeks. Once your current baseline has been identified and you have been able to stabilise your daily routine, you will be asked to gradually increase your physical activity in a structured way.



Making an appointment

Please do speak to the reception desk on your way out of your appointment with Endocrinology to arrange an initial appointment with one of our physiotherapists.

The reception team will be able to book you into our "ENDOCFP" diary in a full 40 minute "New Patient" slot.

**Booked Physiotherapy / Graded Exercise
New Patient Slot**

To be completed by Endocrinology reception

Usual pattern of physiotherapy / graded exercise input

Your new patient appointment would involve us discussing your exercise capabilities (a) pre-chronic fatigue, (b) at their worst and (c) presently. From these discussions we will come up with an individualised treatment programme.

We never ask you to over exercise, and will tend not to perform exercise as part of our appointment.

We do however, usually request you to commence recording your daily exercise / physical activity levels. We would then see you 1-2 months later to review a more detailed physical activities diary.

There are a number of specific programmes suggested for graded exercise in chronic fatigue syndrome, however, we will always treat you as an individual and personalise your programme accordingly.

Home stretching programme

Many patients find a good way to gently access increasing activity levels is by gradually introducing a home stretch routine. This may be something you want to trail at this stage, or perhaps something to discuss in more detail with us at your physiotherapy appointment.

There are some stretching suggestions in the Exercise section on the Salford CFS website:



[www.salfordcfs.wordpress.com/
treatment](http://www.salfordcfs.wordpress.com/treatment)

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

Arabic اذا كنتم بحاجة الى تفسير او ترجمة هذا الرجاء الاتصال

Chinese 如果需要翻译，请拨打电话

Farsi اگر بہ ترجمہ این نیاز دارید ، لطفاً تلفن کنید

0161 206 0224

or Email: InterpretationandTrans@srft.nhs.uk

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This is a teaching hospital which plays an important role in the training of future doctors. The part patients play in this process is essential to make sure that we produce the right quality doctors for all of our futures. If at any time you would prefer not to have students present please inform the doctor or nurses and this will not affect your care in anyway.

Salford Royal NHS
Foundation Trust
Stott Lane, Salford,
Manchester, M6 8HD

Telephone
0161 789 7373
www.srft.nhs.uk

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