

Post Covid Fatigue & You



Contents

- What is post Covid fatigue?
- What causes post Covid fatigue?
- Symptoms
- Boom & Bust Pattern
- Personal evaluation
- Resources

What is post Covid fatigue?

Fatigue is part of the body's normal response to a viral infection, but for some people this can carry on long after the infection has left our bodies. This is called post viral fatigue which can be difficult to describe and is often referred to as 'the invisible symptom'.

Post viral fatigue can feel overwhelming and different from "normal" everyday tiredness. It can affect you both physically and emotionally as well as affecting your attention, concentration and memory.

What causes post viral fatigue?

The exact cause of post viral fatigue is uncertain. However, there is growing research to indicate that it is a normal immune system response to an infection that has not switched off after the infection is gone.

The majority of people with post viral fatigue will improve over time and their energy levels will return to normal. Until that happens, pacing yourself can help you carry-out the activities you need to and want to do. This will aid your recovery and promote independence.

Post Viral Fatigue symptoms – what could I experience...?

Physical ability - Struggling to complete your normal activities at home or work or anywhere else. This can vary and some people may find they lack the energy to complete the simplest of activities.

Mental ability - Just as energy is required for physical activities, it's also required for mental activities. You may struggle to concentrate, understand and remember information or forget names/words. This is often described as 'Brain fog'. Brain fog is not a medical or scientific term but it is recognised by health professionals. It is used by individuals to describe how they feel when their thinking is sluggish, fuzzy, and not sharp.

Sleep disturbances- Needing more sleep during and after an infection is normal. However, as time goes on napping during the day may affect your night time sleep pattern.

Other – Some people may experience a feeling of breathlessness or changes in heart rate and blood pressure when carrying out normal activities. This may cause dizziness/feeling faint or nauseous. This is known as dysautonomia.

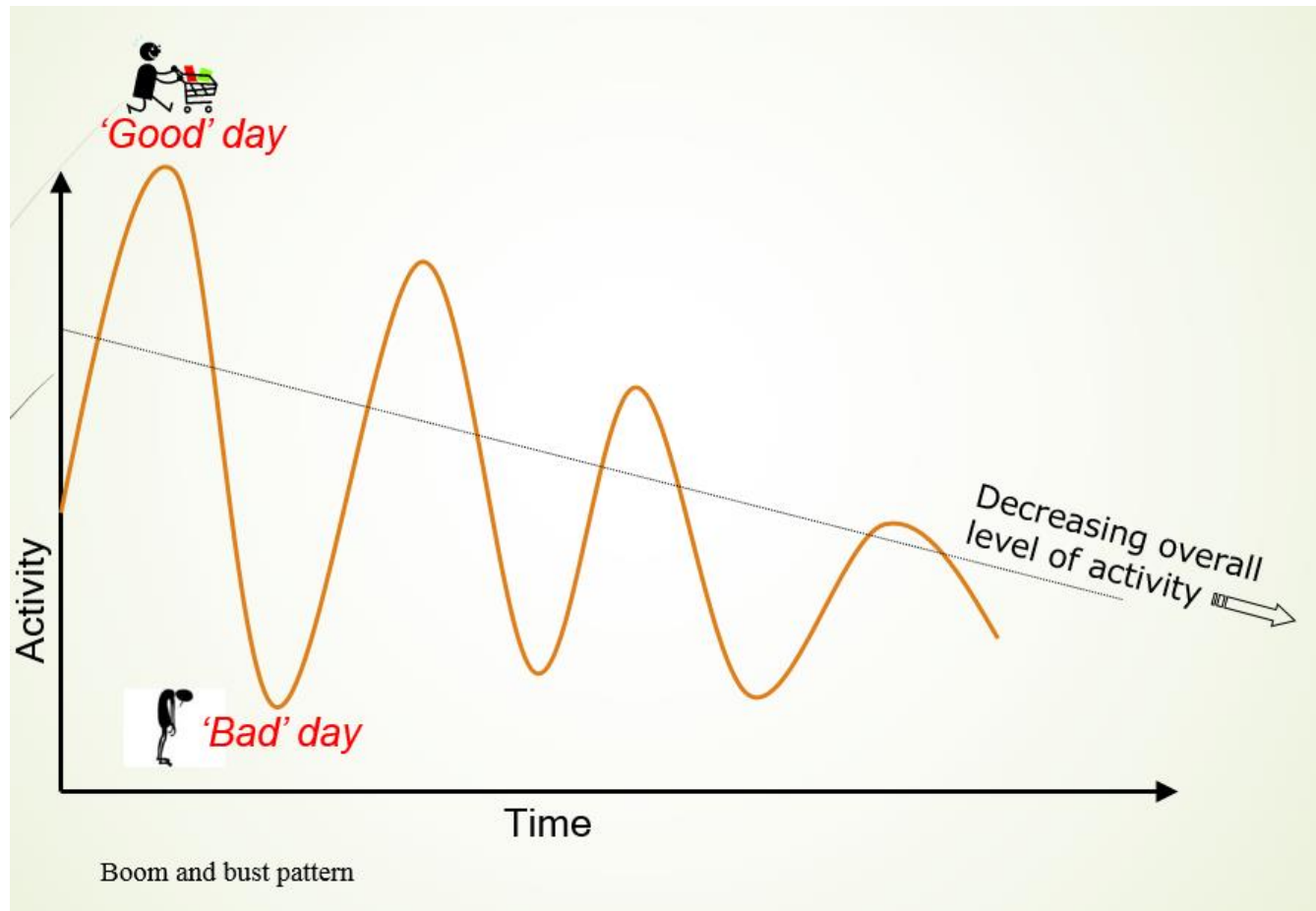
Boom & Bust Pattern

When you have post viral fatigue, you will find your energy levels vary from day to day.

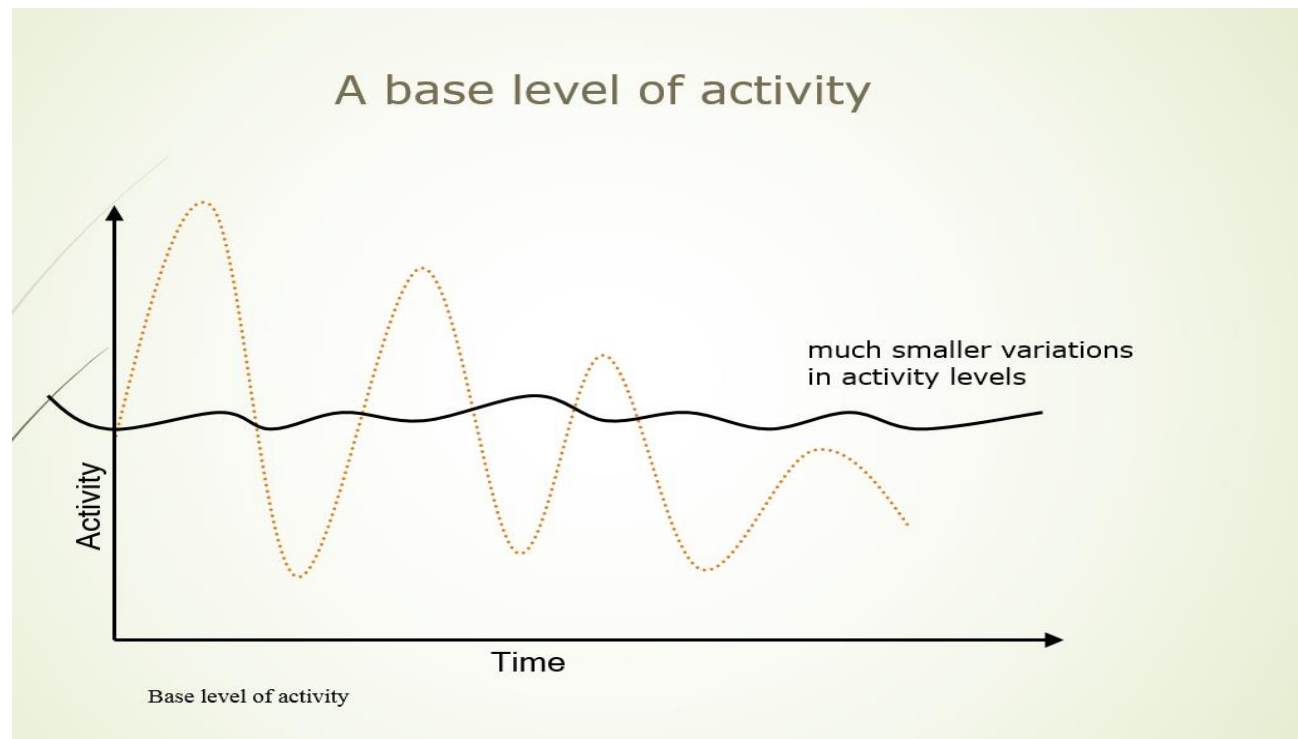
On the days when your energy levels are higher, you may feel motivated to complete as many activities as possible. However, you run the risk of over doing it which can set you back for the next few days.

This can leave you feeling angry, frustrated and disheartened.

This experience of varying energy levels on a day-to-day basis can be described as a Boom and Bust pattern shown below:



However, this experience can be managed by taking your time and slowly increasing your activity levels. Routine helps your body to stabilise itself. By taking small steps to establish a routine for sleeping, eating and daily activities, you can gradually get back to your normal self.



Personal Evaluation-Energy Management

What have you been doing so far to manage your fatigue?

What have you found helpful for your recovery?

Additional Notes

Resources

Websites

NHS COVID Recovery provides practical tips and guides to managing recovery

<https://www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk/>

Long Covid Support is a peer support and advocacy group for people living with Long Covid including access to shared experiences, research and resources.

<https://www.longcovid.org/>

The Royal College of Occupational Therapy has developed a practical guide for people recovering from post-viral fatigue in line with specialist OT's supported by fatigue clinics across England.

<https://www.rcot.co.uk/how-manage-post-viral-fatigue-after-covid-19-0>

Books

The Long Covid self-help guide.

Apps

Headspace –free take 10 section.

Headspace is a meditation app created to guide individuals through meditation, sleep, stress management and mindfulness through guided teaching sessions.

Insight Timer

Insight Timer is a free app specialising in meditation, yoga, anxiety and sleep support.

Calm

The Calm app helps manage sleep, meditation and relaxation classes taught by mindfulness experts.