

Psoriatic Arthritis: 10 Tips to Fight Fatigue

Everyone needs a good night's sleep. Having psoriatic arthritis makes that particularly important.

If you have psoriatic arthritis and need a nap to get through the day, that's a sign that you may need to make some changes so you don't get so fatigued.

Try these 10 tips to help you have more energy.

1. Watch what you eat. Your body needs the right fuel to get through the day. Eat fresh foods like lean protein, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. Avoid sugars or starchy items that give you a short-term boost and then leave you drained.

2. Stay active. Regular exercise like walking or swimming can ease your pain so you sleep better. Activity can also boost your energy during the day.

3. Skip caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol before bedtime. You may think smoking a cigarette, sipping hot tea, or having a cocktail will relax you. But they make it harder for you to fall asleep or stay asleep.

4. Set a solid sleep schedule. Your body prefers a regular routine to shut down and sleep. Try to go to bed at the same time each night and wake up at the same time each morning. Alarms on your clock or phone can help you stay on track.

5. Don't eat for 2 to 3 hours before bedtime. If your body has to digest a heavy meal, you may not be able to fall asleep. Stomach gas may also keep you awake.

6. Relax before bedtime. Take a soothing, warm bath to ease your joint pain and stiffness. Listen to soft music or read a book to take your mind off your work or daily stress.

7. Make your bedroom for sleep and sex only. Remove the TV, computer, cell phone, and other distractions from your bedroom. Keep the room dark, quiet, and cool so you can fall asleep.

8. Use comfortable, supportive bedding. If your mattress or pillows are uncomfortable, you may not be able to stay asleep. Your pain may grow worse. Consider changing pillows or buying a new mattress.

9. Find your energy boosters. When you feel tired during the day, find ways to perk up. Listen to upbeat music. Step outside into the sunshine. Take a short walk break at work. Enjoy a good-for-you snack like fresh fruit or nuts to give you a dose of energy.

10. Follow your treatment plan. Take your medications as prescribed, so you can ease inflammation and pain that may play a role in your fatigue. Set reminders so you take them on time. If you feel side effects, let your doctor know. Don't adjust the dose or stop taking them on your own.

SOURCES:

Alice Gottlieb, MD, PhD, dermatologist-in-chief, Tufts Medical Center.

Sharon Mayo, health educator, National Psoriasis Foundation.

National Psoriasis Foundation: "Can't sleep? Psoriasis, psoriatic arthritis may be to blame."

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