

COVID-19 fatigue: Taking one small step

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Health concerns, financial worries, [ambiguous loss](#), and social challenges combined with anxiety, excessive workload and surge-planning all contribute to 'COVID-fatigue'. When we top off this fatigue with the uncertainty of when this will 'all be over', we can be left with a sense of 'what can I do?'

We have all experienced a significant event that has changed so many aspects of our lives – we have had no control over the arrival of the pandemic. This is very different than the control that is ours to choose what we do with it. We can choose how we will respond and what we can do in this *moment* knowing that there is not 'one thing' that will remedy the experience of the last seven months - instead it is a series of small steps we can take every day.

One small step

Finding the energy to engage in self-care can seem impossible. So we encourage you to find one thing, [one small step](#) that you can do to either bring you some energy or decrease your stress.

Recognize that feeling calm, energized and less anxious is a process

One small thing – a few times in the day – this is manageable. We don't go from exhausted to energized, anxious to calm, or stressed to being at ease with one simple solution. Recognizing that feeling calm, energized, less anxious is a process is key.

Choose what you have control over in this moment and act on that. Once you take a small step to decrease stress or increase your energy, your mind will have 'room' to consider more possibilities.

Find opportunities to reset throughout the day

In the workplace consider what you can do. This might look like doing a 'reset' a few times during the work day or focus on one (even minor) positive event in the day:

- a mindful moment
- a walk outside
- taking five minutes to drink your coffee/tea/protein drink without doing work
- a social, physically-distant hallway conversation
- taking the stairs
- looking at favourite photos

- thinking about a positive interaction with a colleague
- taking your 'break' at the end of the day to give yourself some time to do one errand on the way home
- holding [compassion for yourself and others](#)

For managers and leaders, consider one thing you can do today to support your team:

- take one thing off someone's plate
- acknowledge that the work will still be there tomorrow whether staff leave on time or stay late
- offer your gratitude and thanks for the work being done
- attempt 'pacing' of the work (this is really one long marathon)
- spend five minutes in your next team meeting to 'check-in' to see *how* people are really doing (not *what* they are doing – save that for the rest of the meeting)
- ask the team what 'one small' thing can make a difference for them now?

Choose one thing that you can invest in today

How you choose to respond to your ability to do 'one thing' today that will bring you energy or reduce distress is equally important as taking the step itself. You can choose to think 'that five minute walk won't make a difference' or you can choose to consider 'I invested in myself today – maybe that will give me room to invest in another step tomorrow'.

[Lowering the bar](#) on what you used to consider a successful social, work or personal activity does not mean lowering expectations, it means giving you more opportunity to [give yourself credit](#) for what you have done.

COVID fatigue has built momentum for over a half of a year – it won't be gone tomorrow.

Today is a good time to starting investing in yourself and your team, one small step at a time. We are all in this together.

For additional resources, please review some these additional resources here:

- PHSA's employee and family assistance program (EFAP), provided through Homewood Health, is available to assist you 24/7 via video, phone, private online chat or private messaging.
 - Phone: 1-800-663-1142
 - Website: [Homeweb.ca](#)
- The [Supporting Our Workforce](#) page directs staff to various supports and highlights upcoming webinars and training being held to support the staff's mental well-being during COVID-19.
- The [Psychosocial Resources - Coping with COVID-19](#) page provides resources for staying psychologically well during this time.
- The BCCDC [Mental Well-being During COVID-19](#) page is another excellent resource you may use for tips on supporting your mental well-being.
- Finally, if you or your team member has any unused vacation remaining for 2020, have a discussion with your leader on what time off can be granted, while balancing the clinical and operational needs of your department.