

How to cope with boredom when you have extreme fatigue

The topic of how to cope with boredom is one that comes up a lot in the sessions I hold. Doing the right thing when you have extreme fatigue often means doing very little for much of the time - physically, anyway. And it can be difficult to find a way to deal with this and stop your mindset sliding into a less positive place. So here are five tips that might well help you to keep those boredom pangs at bay:

Tip 1 - don't look at it as doing nothing

Resting and taking it easy can sometimes be viewed as 'doing nothing', but this couldn't be further from the truth! Whether it's because you're proactively resting as part of your careful Pacing approach or having to rest because your symptoms are telling you you've overdone it, look at it as a positive action you're taking. Far from doing nothing, you are doing the best thing you could probably be doing at that time!

Tip 2 - match your internal perception and external environment

Many people find it difficult to rest. Pretty much everybody finds it difficult at first - particularly those who were previously used to living life at 100 miles an hour and always rushing around. Calming your nervous system by doing things like meditation and yoga nidra is hugely beneficial for those tackling extreme fatigue, but many find it so difficult to get used to slowing down that much.

So, I want to talk a little bit about internal representation - this is about changing how we match our view of our *external* environment with our *internal* perception. If that sounds a bit confusing, let me give you a quick explanation...

Imagine you have your own personal metronome, which is ticking along at a pace that is comfortable for you. If you have to spend time in places, or with people, who are at a completely different speed than your personal metronome it can feel uncomfortable. I wonder if you can recall a time where you were waiting in a shop queue that was moving very slowly, due to the people ahead of you seeming to take their time over things. I bet you can remember feeling a little bit frustrated by it! This is because that external environment was moving much slower than your own internal metronome. You might not have needed to get anywhere in a hurry after that shop visit, but your internal speed wanted to get things done quickly! Likewise, if you spend time with people who are much faster than you, this can start to make you feel a bit overwhelmed and bothered. That's because they're trying to get your metronome to tick faster than it feels happier doing!

So, my tip is to slow down your external environment if you're finding it difficult to rest. Listen to some slow classical music, play your audio book at the 0.8 speed setting (or slower, play around and see what works and is still pleasurable to listen to). Try talking a little more slowly when you're resting and asking anyone around you to do the same. Certainly, don't watch action films or listen to fast-beat music - choose slower options. And once your metronome starts to slow down a little, you might well find that it becomes easier to embrace resting and meditation.

Tip 3 - embrace being calm and gentle with yourself

Following on nicely from Tip 2 above, another way to find it easier to relax and do less is to really embrace it and almost make it an indulgence. Wear your cosiest, most comfortable clothes or PJ's, light candles or have essential oils burning, buy yourself a cosy throw or blanket in a colour you love, for those sofa-rest days.

Tip 4 - get themey!

We hear a lot about the benefits of creating a bit of structure and routine in our days in order to make them flow a little faster. Which is great advice, as it's very true. But I want to take that into a slightly different direction and suggest you think about 'theming' different parts of your days and weeks. Why not make Mondays the days that any available energy is spent learning about something new? Tuesdays could be the days you do something different nutritiously. Wednesdays could be your indulgent days where you do things for yourself most of the day. There are so many different ways you could do this, and it can really help to make the week go by a little faster.

Tip 5 - focus on something that you can improve faster

Depending on your specific condition, improving your extreme fatigue symptoms can take a considerable time. Looking ahead towards an uncertain timeframe can be one of the most difficult things to accept. So, my fifth tip is to think about focusing on something that you can enhance in a shorter timescale - or at least achieve considerable improvements.

When I was tackling my own ME/CFS recovery, I decided to focus on improving my skin. I was in my early 40's and had never had the glowing blemish-free skin that I'd have loved. So, I decided to focus on seeing what I could achieve with all of the time I now had on my hands. I researched different products and cleansing routines and had the energy most days to do something beneficial, like a face pack or facial massage - as long as I timed it carefully. I'm pleased to report that over a decade later my skin is one of my best features! I often get compliments on it, and the habits and routines I got into during those difficult months have held me in very good stead now I'm approaching 50.

Other things you might want to consider: make plans to improve your garden - even if you have to delegate doing the work to someone else; get your nails looking fabulous; grow your hair into a new style or (for men) how about seeing how you look with a beard?! There are lots of things you can do - they might not have been things you'd have even contemplated giving time and attention to before, and might seem quite trivial, but priorities change in many ways when you're tackling your fatigue rescue. And if it relieves the boredom, isn't that the most important thing for now?

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I hope these tips have given you at least one or two things to think about doing differently.
Take care,

Pamela Rose
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I have a waiting list for my 121 Fatigue Coaching at the moment,
if you're keen to access my help sooner than later please consider signing up for my

'Three Week Fatigue Rescue' interactive course.

I cover so many hints and tips and provide useful advice and guidance -
if you found this Guide helpful, it's just a small example of the broader help I give.

Find out more at: <https://www.pamelarose.co.uk/3weekrescue>
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