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Fighting Fatigue

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Fatigue increases the risk of making errors in thought and actions.



To avoid fatigue, change your lifestyle.

Fighting Fatigue

BY WINSTON J. CRAIG

Do you feel tired, overly tired? Are you weary, exhausted or lacking energy? Do you feel a struggle to stay motivated, or even stay awake during the day? Do you have trouble remembering things? Maybe you are fatigued, really fatigued. About 20 percent of Americans claim to have fatigue intense enough to interfere with their normal life.

The first step toward relief is to take a self-inventory. Chances are you need to make one or two lifestyle changes. Maybe you are working too hard, getting too little sleep, overly anxious, getting too little exercise, not drinking enough water, or having strained personal or work relationships. Overloaded circuits have a habit of blowing a fuse.

Fatigue is also a symptom of psychological problems, such as anxiety, grief or chronic stress. Depression and dealing with chronic pain can also lead to fatigue. Constant exhaustion may be a sign of a medical condition, such as anemia, chronic fatigue syndrome, thyroid problem or sleep apnea.

Certain medications may also cause drowsiness or fatigue, including antihistamines, blood pressure medicines, cough and cold remedies, prescription pain medications and some antidepressants. The use and abuse of alcohol or caffeine can cause fatigue.

Fatigue limits our ability to think clearly, make accurate judgments, engage in critical thinking, be creative and plan effectively. People experiencing fatigue are more likely to express negative attitudes, and are more prone to anxiety and depression.

We function best with regular cycles of work and rest. Any system of the human body that is overworked or excessively stressed without appropriate rest soon fatigues. An over-



worked muscle will cramp and lose function. The constantly working brain that is not given proper rest and sleep will fatigue and dysfunction just as a computer crashes when the batteries become fully discharged.

Fatigue decreases your efficiency and productivity, and increases your risk of making errors. During World War II, factories in Britain stepped up to a work schedule of 74 hours a week. However, factory workers were not properly rested, and

accidents increased. The factory owners decided to reduce work to 48 hours a week with one day off per week. To their surprise, production went up 15 percent even though they worked less hours. In addition, morale improved, absenteeism dropped, spoiled work decreased and there were fewer accidents. Eliminating fatigue made the difference.

God instituted a weekly time out (the Sabbath) to help us slow down and spend meaningful time with Him, to regain our focus, reflect on the direction of our life and spend quality time with our family. In our stressful, busy lives we need to experience some downtime. The weekly rhythm enables us to take a regular break. Christ also called a time out to get rest from a hectic schedule (see Mark 6:31). A regular period of rest and relaxation ensures freshness and vitality. Making some lifestyle changes may put vitality back into your life.

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