

Handling Fatigue the Tibb way

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Many of us are prone to fatigue, and the misery it usually brings. Fatigue is our body's normal response to enduring mental or physical stress of one form or another. It is on the increase in our fast-moving modern world, as the punishing demands of our job, domestic and social activities mount. It badly affects our quality of life; for around one in five of us it impacts negatively on our work performance, with the real risks that go along with this. If brought on by unusual physical stress or exertion, fatigue is acute, normal and subsides with rest and sleep. Chronic fatigue is another story. In many cases it is linked to a medical problem like anaemia or diabetes. In most cases, however, it is related to our often dysfunctional lifestyle. What do we usually do to escape from it? Drink more coke, or coffee, or energy drinks; dose up on anti-anxiety drugs; take extended leave. These may work in the short term, but as Tibb claims, the root cause of the problem has to be identified, and dealt with properly. Tibb sees fatigue as disturbance to our mental and physical harmonies, leading to an imbalance of our qualities. The symptoms of fatigue are Physis' way of telling us to slow down.

Tibb seeks out the underlying disharmonies behind chronic fatigue. It then rectifies them by encouraging lifestyle changes, dietotherapy and other time-proven measures.

What is fatigue?

Chronic fatigue is a very common condition, familiar to most of us. It lowers our vitality and mental capacity anything from a few days up to several weeks or even longer. Feeling deeply tired and weary through the day, but unable to

Fatigue tends to affect our mind rather than our body. Either way, 'the flame of life is turned down'.

sleep at night is the main symptom for most of us. A constant weariness slowly develops, and a strong desire to sleep consumes us. Muscle weakness, chronic, low-level pain and a depressed mood may alarm us. In most cases fatigue slowly recedes. However, if it becomes chronic, intense or prolonged, it seriously affects our overall state of health, both mental and physical. We become totally de-motivated, and suffer from a serious lack of energy.

Different types of fatigue

Anyone affected by **physical fatigue** cannot operate at their usual level of physical ability. On the other hand, **mental fatigue** is more linked to feeling sleepy and being unable to concentrate properly.

Fatigue is different from drowsiness or sleepiness. But these are common symptoms.

They often exist together. If someone is physically exhausted for long enough, they are more than likely mentally tired.

Chronic fatigue syndrome is perhaps the most extreme and serious form. This baffling and often crippling disorder persist for up to several months and sometimes much longer. It plagues the sufferer with muscle and joint pain, severe body weakness, tiredness not relieved by sleep, problems with memory and concentration, and a host of other unpleasant symptoms. If we were to succumb to it, we would be exhausted and listless all the time, and complain of feeling 'totally run down'. The cause is not known, but a virus has been implicated in its origin.

Causes of fatigue

Modern medicine has yet to identify the underlying cause, or causes, of the chronic fatigue syndrome, nor come up with an effective treatment strategy. However, the lesser, more common forms of fatigue are known have a variety of causes. Personal stress is often the main culprit, although many aspects of lifestyle contribute, such as drug or alcohol abuse, too much coffee, and certain prescription medicines.

Chronic blood loss frequently results in fatigue, as do other conditions that

Fatigue is a regular companion of several disorders, including diabetes, thyroid problems, arthritis and obesity. Other disorders where fatigue is an inevitable partner are depression, fibromyalgia, glandular fever and other viral infections, and irritable bowel syndrome. Generally, anyone with cancer, or a heart complaint, or recovering from a stroke will complain of chronic fatigue.

Children and adolescents are often fatigued by boredom, and lack of good sleep due to obsession with social media.

Those receiving chemotherapy for cancer are very much prone to it. A number of prescription drugs are also implicated: certain sedatives, anti-anxiety agents and anti-depressants, especially at the higher doses and over the longer term. The regular use of anti-allergy drugs, like the older antihistamines and steroids, and some blood pressure lowering drugs, often lead to fatigue. A more recent origin of this disorder is adrenal fatigue.

In older people fatigue often arises through one or other ailment which go with the ageing process, or the drugs prescribed to treat them. It also develops from the physical and emotional stresses which are increasingly common at a certain age.

What is Tibb's view of fatigue?

Tibb says that much fatigue comes from a poor lifestyle – constant stress, inadequate diet, lack of water and some nutrients, low physical activity, and disturbed, poor quality sleep.

Tibb accepts that chronic fatigue can be a symptom of a chronic disorder. However, in many cases it views it as a normal and predictable response to inner disharmony, brought about by excessive physical over-exertion or prolonged mental stress. Tibb sees most cases of fatigue as the result of an increase in our inner qualities of *coldness* and *moistness*. This imbalance dampens down

the living body's metabolism, so that the amount of heat available for the myriad of everyday activities is reduced. This imbalance is usually aggravated by one of a number of chronic disorders, plus a lifestyle which distorts the body's **coldness and moistness balance**. Some of the Lifestyle Factors implicated are:

- (a) The person's regular food and drink – poor quality, accompanied by bad eating habits.
- (b) Not enough physical rest, and/or poor sleep quality and duration.
- (c) Dieting excessively ('yo-yo' dieting) or fasting improperly, especially to reduce weight rapidly.
- (d) Extreme physical exercise, especially in competition.

If these behaviours are not corrected, Physis, our 'inner doctor', eventually finds itself no longer capable of restoring and maintaining inner harmony of the body's qualities. The continuous stress leads to symptoms of fatigue developing. (Physis is responsible for overall regulation and control within the living body, especially the power of self-healing.)

The Tibb treatment of fatigue

[The detailed Tibb approach to chronic fatigue is laid out in the book: "Healing with Tibb", by Prof Bhikha and Dr Joy Saville, p 52.

Tibb's way to beat chronic fatigue, once a diagnosis has been made, is to first identify the origins of the disorder. If a chronic disorder is the source of the fatigue, then this should be dealt with by the appropriate healthcare provider. If the fatigue arises from other factors, then the reasons for disturbance in the balance of qualities are addressed.

Once this has been achieved, the symptoms will fall away. Generally, this involves reducing the excess coldness and moistness qualities linked to fatigue, mainly by changes to the Tibb Lifestyle Factors. Whatever measures are taken, they should support our Physis, not oppose or undermine it.

Tibb's recommended Do's

- *Have a good breakfast.* Start the day with a good high-fibre breakfast.
- *Making changes to the daily diet* – by selecting foods which are predominantly hot and dry in quality. On a day-to-day basis go for plenty of fruit, vegetables, nuts, whole grains and soured foods like natural yoghurt. Likewise, oily fish, chicken, nuts and spinach, and hot spices like turmeric and ginger.
- *Increasing fluid intake* –the daily fluid intake should be stepped up, because a common cause of fatigue is dehydration. Building up to a minimum of eight glasses of water a day is advised.
- *Getting more active* – a lack of physical activity or being overweight is often behind our fatigue, so a programme of regular, reasonable physical exercise will prove beneficial. There is also a spin-off, in that exercise improves poor blood circulation, which is known to aggravate fatigue.
- *Trying for better sleep and rest* – sleep quality will be improved by adopting measures for better sleep hygiene leading to long term changes in habit. Resting after exercise should be adopted.
- *Reducing stress* – many routes are available: Tibb deep breathing and relaxation exercises, meditation, relaxation, and massage, for example. Stress reduction can be further enhanced by use of herbal remedies like *Stress-Away*, which soothe the anxiety responsible for mental fatigue.
- *Involve others* – when swamped and overwhelmed by the situation, asking for help, helps. Working with others makes tasks easier, reduces stress and diminishes tiredness.

Tibb's recommended Don'ts

- *Personal habits* – reducing alcohol intake and smoking should help repel chronic fatigue.
- *Avoid certain foodstuffs* – especially highly processed, fried and junk foods, sugar-loaded snacks or soft drinks, and refined white flour products.
- *Stimulants* – drinking caffeine-rich beverages should be curtailed, especially in the evening.
- *Avoid long daytime naps* – these make it harder to fall asleep at night.

Herbal remedies for fatigue relief

The aim of relieving chronic fatigue with various herbs is to assist Physis in restoring harmony. *Ginseng, gingko biloba, rhodiola*, almonds and milk thistle have been used for centuries to alleviate fatigue, and several formulations are available here in South Africa. A combination herb, *Tibb-Completone*, provides an energy boost and much-needed tonic for most of us battling fatigue. This blends the proven stress relievers licorice, *shatavari, ashwaganga* and wild violet.

A number of pharmacological actions have been identified in various herbs. These are probably part of their ability to relieve fatigue. Some have actions which mimic that of the steroid stress hormone cortisol, such as ginseng. Others, like licorice, prevent the breakdown of cortisol by the body's liver.

Summary

Chronic fatigue is common, and familiar to most of us. It affects our overall state of health, both mental and physical, and we become de-motivated and lack energy. Fatigue is a normal response to mental or physical stress. It is often linked to a medical problem like anaemia or diabetes, but in most cases it is related to a dysfunctional lifestyle. Tibb sees fatigue as disturbance to our mental and physical harmonies, leading to an imbalance of our qualities of *coldness* and *moistness*. The symptoms of fatigue are Physis' way of telling us to slow down. Tibb asserts that the basis of the problem has to be identified, and dealt with properly. Physical fatigue means we cannot operate at the usual level of physical ability. Mental fatigue is more linked to feeling sleepy and being unable to concentrate properly. Much fatigue arises from physical disorders like anaemia and mental disorders like depression. In other cases, personal stress is the main culprit, although many aspects of lifestyle contribute, such as boredom, drug or alcohol abuse and certain prescription medicines. Lifestyle factors which lead to fatigue are inadequate diet, poor eating habits, lack of physical activity, too little sleep or rest, excessive dieting or fasting, and extreme exercising. Yibb identifies the underlying source of fatigue, and offers guidance in resolving it, with lifestyle advice, dietary measures, massage and herbal therapy.

Further Reading

Physis in health: <www.tibb.co.za/articles/Tibb_and_Physis%20.pdf>

Lifestyle and fatigue: <www.reviewjournal.com/life/health/combat-fatigue-through-diet-exercise-lifestyle-changes>

Tibb and fatigue: <www.tibb.co.za/ailments.html>

The nature of fatigue: <www.medicalnewstoday.com/email-an-article/248002>