

PEM

THE ME ASSOCIATION



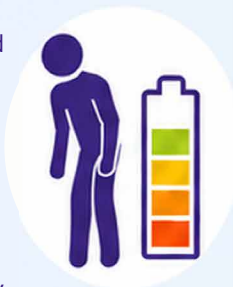
Post Exertional Malaise (PEM)
also referred to as **Post Exertional Symptom Exacerbation (PESE)** and/or **Post Exertional Neuroimmune Exhaustion (PENE)**

Recognising and managing PEM is essential to prevent deterioration and support recovery.

WHAT IS PEM?

PEM is a disproportionate and profound worsening of symptoms and/or appearance of new symptoms, following physical or cognitive exertion. It is often delayed by hours or days and has a prolonged recovery time that is not relieved by rest.

The exact cause is unknown.
The MEA funds research in to causality.



IMPORTANT: PEM is not relieved by rest and can lead to loss of function and quality of life.

WHAT CAN TRIGGER PEM?



e.g. PHYSICAL
walking, exercise,
housework, standing,
lifting



e.g. MENTAL
concentration,
problem solving,
reading, screen use



e.g. EMOTIONAL
stress,
upsetting events,
social interactions



e.g. SENSORY
sights, sounds,
smells and
touch/vibration



e.g. ORTHOSTATIC STRESS
upright activity
time with feet
on the ground



e.g. ENVIRONMENTAL
temperature, chemical
exposure, barometric
pressure



Even enjoyable or necessary activities can trigger PEM

HOW PEM TYPICALLY UNFOLDS



PEM is unpredictable and can lead to long-term decline in function.

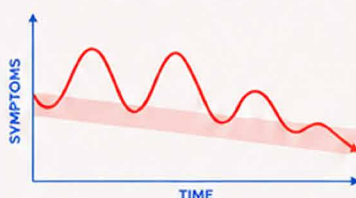
PEM SYMPTOM PRESENTATION

- Extreme fatigue
- Increased pain
- Brain fog and difficulty concentrating
- Muscle weakness
- Headaches
- Dizziness / lightheadedness
- Nausea
- Sleep disturbance
- Flu-like feelings
- Sensory sensitivity
- Feeling more ill than usual
- Symptom exacerbation



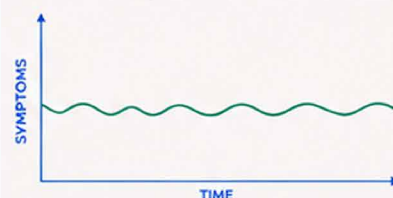
WHY PACING MATTERS

PUSHING ON / OVERDOING



Leads to more frequent and severe PEM and a decline in function over time.

PACING / STAYING WITHIN LIMITS



Helps reduce the risk of PEM and supports stability and better quality of life.

WHAT HELPS



Pace and plan activities



Rest before you need to



Prioritise and break tasks down



Protect sleep and recovery time



Seek support - you don't have to do it alone



Be kind to yourself



KEY MESSAGE

PEM is real, serious and requires careful management.

ME/CFS is a serious, multi-system condition. Understanding PEM is essential to provide better care and outcomes.



For resources and support:
www.meassociation.org.uk



Healthcare 4 ME
TRAINING • SUPPORT
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