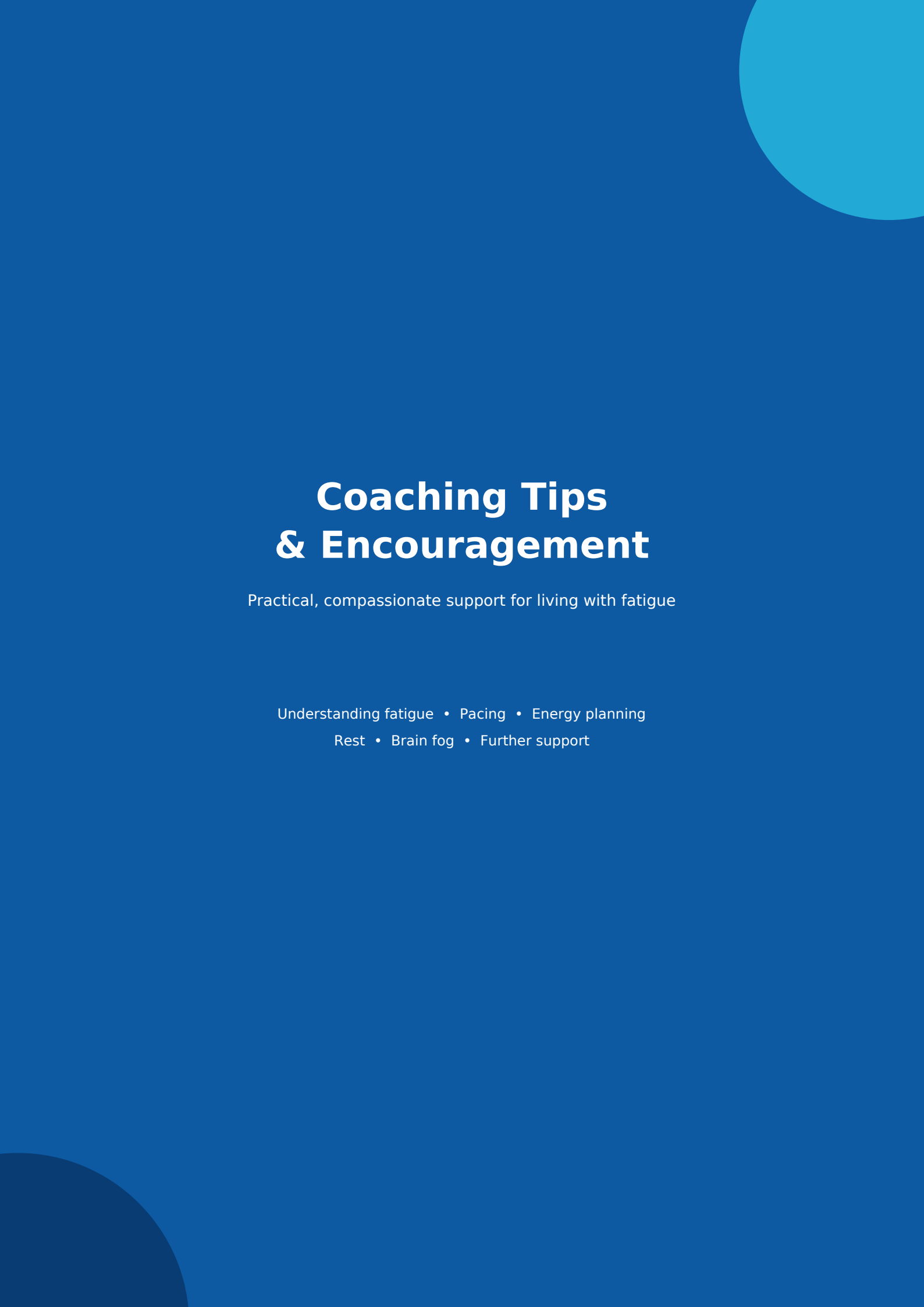




Coaching Tips & Encouragement

Practical, compassionate support for living with fatigue

Understanding fatigue • Pacing • Energy planning
Rest • Brain fog • Further support

Understanding fatigue

Fatigue is more than ordinary tiredness. It can feel like your body, mind or emotions have run out of usable energy, and sleep may not fully restore you. It can be linked with illness, pain, medication, stress, poor sleep, hormonal changes or neurodivergent overload. The starting point is to take the experience seriously, not to measure yourself against what you could do on a better day.

Coaching tips to try

- Check in with your whole system: physical energy, concentration, emotions, pain, sleep and sensory load.
- Use simple language such as: “My energy is limited today, so I need to choose what matters most.”
- Notice patterns without blaming yourself. Record the time of day, activity, sleep, food, symptoms and recovery needed.
- Reduce the hidden work of decisions. Keep easy meals, comfortable clothes and a short list of low-energy activities available.
- Explain fatigue to trusted people before you reach empty. Be specific about whether you need practical help, quiet company or fewer demands.
- Treat rest as part of managing your health, not as a reward you must earn.

Encouragement: Fatigue is not laziness or a lack of motivation. Your energy limits are real, even when other people cannot see them. Listening earlier is a form of self-respect.

A gentle reminder: Choose one idea that feels manageable. These resources offer general support and do not replace individual medical or psychological care.

Pacing: doing less before you crash

Pacing means balancing activity and recovery so that you are less likely to move between pushing through and crashing. It is not about giving up everything that matters. It is about finding a steadier rhythm and stopping before your body forces you to stop.

Coaching tips to try

- Break tasks into smaller stages and pause between them. “Shower, rest, dress” may be kinder than treating it as one task.
- Aim to finish with a little energy left rather than using every available drop.
- Alternate heavier and lighter activities. Remember that thinking, socialising, travelling and coping with noise also use energy.
- Use a timer or planned stopping point when you are likely to become absorbed and miss your body’s signals.
- On a better day, resist the pressure to catch up with everything. A good day still needs protection.
- After a difficult day, return gently to your usual rhythm instead of trying to compensate through overactivity.

Encouragement: Stopping before you are exhausted can feel unfamiliar, especially if you are used to pushing through. Each earlier pause is practice in creating a more sustainable life.

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Planning with an energy budget

An energy budget helps you decide where limited capacity needs to go. Unlike a fixed timetable, it can change from day to day. The aim is not perfect control; it is to make conscious choices and leave room for basic needs, unexpected events and recovery.

Coaching tips to try

- Begin the day with a quick energy check: low, medium or higher. Adjust expectations to match what is actually available.
- Choose one priority, one helpful extra and one thing that can wait. Keep the list deliberately short.
- Count invisible costs such as getting ready, travel, masking, conversations, pain management and switching between tasks.
- Group similar tasks together and reduce unnecessary journeys, decisions or changes of focus.
- Place recovery time in the plan before and after demanding activities, not only when everything else is finished.
- Ask: “Can this be delayed, shortened, shared, simplified or done differently?”

Encouragement: You do not need to spend all your energy proving that you are coping. Choosing what to protect is a skill, and leaving something undone can be a wise decision.

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Rest that actually restores

Rest is not always the same as sleep or lying down. You may need physical rest, mental quiet, sensory relief, emotional space or a break from social demands. Rest becomes more restorative when it responds to the kind of tiredness you are experiencing.

Coaching tips to try

- Ask what feels overloaded: muscles, attention, senses, emotions or social capacity.
- For physical rest, sit or lie comfortably, support aching areas and reduce unnecessary movement.
- For mental rest, step away from messages, decisions and information. Try familiar music, a simple audio or quiet.
- For sensory rest, lower the lights, reduce noise, change uncomfortable clothing or use ear defenders if helpful.
- Choose calm enjoyment without turning it into another achievement. Rest does not have to be productive.
- Keep rest periods available throughout the day. Short, regular pauses may help more than waiting for complete exhaustion.

Encouragement: Rest is a need, not a weakness. You are allowed to discover what genuinely restores you, even if it looks different from somebody else's idea of resting.

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Brain fog and reduced concentration

Fatigue can affect memory, word-finding, attention, processing speed and decision-making. This is often called brain fog. It can be frustrating or frightening, but it does not mean you have become less intelligent. Your brain may simply have less capacity available in that moment.

Coaching tips to try

- Move information out of your head: use reminders, written steps, voice notes, calendars or labels.
- Do one thing at a time and remove extra input. Close unused tabs, silence notifications and reduce background noise.
- Schedule detailed work for the part of the day when your thinking is usually clearest.
- Use short work periods followed by genuine pauses. Stop if accuracy or comprehension starts to fall.
- Ask people to slow down, repeat information or put important details in writing.
- Postpone non-urgent decisions when your mind is foggy. “I need time to think” is a complete and reasonable response.

Encouragement: Needing prompts, extra time or written information does not diminish your ability. Supportive tools protect the energy you need for what matters.

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When fatigue needs further support

Persistent or worsening fatigue deserves attention because it can have many causes. Keeping notes about your symptoms can help a healthcare professional understand the pattern. You do not need to diagnose yourself or wait until you can no longer cope before asking for support.

Coaching tips to try

- Speak to a GP if fatigue is new, unexplained, getting worse, lasting for several weeks or affecting everyday life.
- Mention related symptoms, changes in sleep, mood, pain, breathing, appetite, weight, bleeding, infection and any new medication.
- Ask whether medication side effects, sleep problems, nutritional deficiencies or another health condition need to be considered.
- Seek help for your emotional wellbeing too. Long-term fatigue can bring grief, isolation, anxiety and low mood.
- Ask about reasonable adjustments at work or education, such as flexible hours, rest breaks, reduced travel or written instructions.
- Seek urgent medical help for severe breathing difficulty, chest pain, fainting, sudden weakness, new confusion or another rapidly developing serious symptom.

Encouragement: You deserve to be listened to. Asking for an assessment or practical adjustment is not making a fuss; it is an appropriate response when fatigue is affecting your life.

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Urgent support: If you or someone else may be in immediate danger, call 999 or go to A&E. In England, call NHS 111 for urgent medical or mental-health advice. Samaritans can be reached free in the UK and ROI on 116 123.

**Until next time, give yourself space to breathe.
With love, Maggie**