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## 6 Familiar Signs of Fatigue and What to do About Them

**Have you ever pushed yourself to the brink of disaster?**

**You've worked so hard for so long. Fatigue takes over. Sickness ensues.**

**I've been there. I remember it like it was yesterday.**

### **Fourth Quarter**

I woke up Christmas morning 2012 completely exhausted. I felt sick, I'd gained fifteen pounds in less than two months and I didn't want to get out of bed...ever. Was this really how I was supposed to feel on Christmas morning? Our daughter's second Christmas...she was so excited...and I was a mess.

For the previous seven weeks, I strung together a series of 10 to 12-hour days. Day after day, with (thankfully) only Sundays off. I was now at the end of this nightmare stretch and my mind and body had paid the price.

The fourth quarter of every year is my busiest time. For one of my [consulting clients](#), the stretch from mid-November to mid-December makes up half their annual revenue. It's an important time of year for my business. It can literally make or break the year.

Prior to Christmas, I'd spent most days waking up long before sunrise and working well into the night. It seemed like my life was all work, all day, day after day after day.

By Christmas morning, I was a new man...in the worst possible way. I had a cold that seemed like it would never end, my pants didn't fit very well, and mentally I wasn't there. I couldn't even fully enjoy Christmas with my family.

### **When you have to push hard**

Sometimes you have to push yourself hard. Sometimes you do have to work 14-hour days or even more. That's a part of life at least once.

There are times at work or in your personal life that require you to give extra effort, longer hours, and more energy. But just because you're pushing harder, it doesn't mean your body and mind have to suffer.

Below are six familiar signs of fatigue and then later what to do about them. Before we go any further though, let me be clear with a disclaimer. The information is not medical advice, and should not be treated as such. The information on this website is provided “as is” without any representations or warranties, expressed or implied. I make no representations or warranties in relation to the medical and health information on this website. You must not rely on the information on this website as an alternative to medical advice from your doctor or other professional healthcare provider. Consult a qualified doctor or other professional healthcare provider about specific medical issues.

## **6 signs of fatigue**

### **1. Suppressed immune system**

If you've been burning the candle at both ends, it's likely that the first thing to suffer is going to be your immune system. Statistically speaking, you are more prone to get sick when you are fatigued.

### **2. Mild chest pains**

I debated including this because it could be more serious, but I know that for me, when I was really pushing it in late 2012, my chest felt tight for the last four weeks. For me, on a scale of 1 to 10, with a 10 being unbearable pain, it was only a 3 or 4, but it was still noticeable.

### **3. Depression**

I wasn't clinically depressed, but I did experience a mild melancholy that I can't explain. The tedium, lack of sleep, and lack of downtime likely piled up to reduce my happiness levels enough to feel depressed.

### **4. Stomach problems**

I won't go into the specifics, but fatigue often leads to stomach aches, diarrhea, and/or heartburn. When you are pushing, you tend to eat less healthy, eat more on the run, and not digest your food properly. This can lead to all sorts of problems.

### **5. Temperature regulation**

This was a big one for me. I am normally hot-blooded. I wear shorts and a t-shirt in the house while my wife Tara is dressed in pants, a sweatshirt and is covered with a blanket. During the fourth quarter of 2012, though, I noticed that I kept going back and forth between hot and cold. One moment, I was freezing, the next I was sweating.

## **6. Much, much more**

There are tons of other signs ranging from muscle weakness to weight loss (or gain for me), so if you feel like you are truly suffering from fatigue, consult your doctor.

So what do you do when you really do have to push it? How do you avoid the paralyzing fatigue?

It's all about being proactive. Here's what I learned from my experience in 2012.

### **8 ways to proactively beat fatigue**

#### **1. Eat right.**

When you are working 12-plus hours a day, eating right is more important than ever. Fueling your body is crucial.

For most people, when they are working extra and feeling tired, their diet becomes like mine. Refined sugar, saturated fat, starches, and other garbage. I ate crap and naturally felt like crap.

If you have to push it at work, make sure you fuel your body correctly. You can counteract a lot of the effects of being overworked. Plan ahead and spend some time on Sunday each week cutting vegetables and making healthy meals for the week. Pack healthy lunches and tons of health snacks like nuts, fruits, and vegetables. Then you won't be tempted by that candy bar.

#### **2. Exercise.**

Get at least a little exercise every day. I love to run, but I sometimes I can't spend an hour doing that when I have a long day ahead. But I can spend thirty minutes.

The key here is to schedule even five to twenty minutes to get in your best five to twenty minute workout ever. Run your fastest mile, do 100 reps as quickly as possible. Anything to get moving.

#### **3, Be proactive with supplements.**

I use a [natural cold remedy](#) anytime I get a cold. The problem is that I only use once I am sick.

The better way is to proactively take the remedy when I have to really push my body so I can fight off the cold before I catch it.

The same is true with supplements. Don't overdo it, but when you are pushing yourself, your body might need more of a certain vitamin or mineral. Consult your doctor if that is the case with you.

#### **4. Limit caffeine.**

I know that you feel like you need a little jolt, but you need to limit your caffeine intake.

The best way to do this is to plan your caffeine consumption. According to the [Mayo Clinic](#), 200-300mg of caffeine is a healthy daily amount (an average-sized cup of coffee has about 100mg). More than 300mg is dangerous territory.

My two rules for caffeine are: 1. No more than 100mg at a time. 2. No caffeine after 5:00pm (although I do forget this when we eat out sometimes).

### **5. No electronic devices in bed.**

Once you are in bed, it's time for sleeping, not browsing. The light from electronic devices has been proven to disturb sleep.

So put away the tablet or phone. If you need to read, like I do, before bed, use a book (you know, the thing with a cover and pages).

### **6. Take a nap.**

One great way to counteract less sleep is with a quick nap.

Short naps don't replace deep REM sleep, but they will help you refocus during a busy day. I've found the best time to take them is approximately 60% of the way through a busy day.

[Michael Hyatt](#) has some great articles on naps if you want to explore further.

### **7. Have something to look forward to.**

One way to keep your energy up and stay sane during a busy stretch is to [look forward to something](#) (click that link to learn more about why this works)

When you are looking forward to something after the busy stretch, you can count down the days to something truly special. So schedule something awesome after the busy stretch. A vacation, a concert, or even just a three or four-day weekend at home.

### **8. What would you add? Leave a comment below.**

You can push yourself without paying the price. Follow these tips and next time you will be ready.

*What would you add to this list? When you really have to push it for an extended period of time, what do you do to stay healthy?*