

Long Covid/ Chronic Fatigue

Strategies for Healing

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Introduction

Hi! This document is aimed at providing helpful, non-medical strategies towards total recovery. The following points contain *an* approach to healing. There might be quicker fixes out there, and these can have a valuable place in a recovery journey. However, I believe that for lasting, comprehensive healing, nothing compares to soothing the nervous system and accessing innate healing. In my experience this is how best to emerge unchained to any crutch and unlimited in capacity.

Everything listed has been personally helpful to me- as a young mother going through several crises followed by complex PTSD and then long covid- or to someone I know. Strategies and treatments listed are meant as suggestion only. Everyone is advised to do their own research on anything that resonates.

Feel free to pass this document on to anyone going through long covid or other chronic conditions. I believe every condition is completely heal-able if we listen to our body, unblock anything in the way, and align ourselves to receive God's unlimited energy flow.

Michal Smith, London 2025

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Pillars of Healing

- Often, it is highly sensitive/perfectionistic/driven/giving people who go through chronic conditions. Perhaps because they've been over-stimulated, easily traumatised, or have been over-reaching for a long time. Healing is a process of rebalancing; soothing and under-reaching for as long as it takes until the body and nervous system restore and allow more energy and capacity. Doing less, not more, to get better.
- The energy of the world is healing and growth. God sends down healing and growth every day (think of bruises and burns disappearing and thorns growing back however many times they're cut). Through soothing and resting we align ourselves with this flow and receive it into our bodies. There is healing for every ailment (Talmud Megilla 13b).
- Letting go as the key to healing. We're often holding fear or trauma in our body and we're stuck in a tight, tense grip of high alert. Existing in fight/flight/freeze for a sustained period keeps the sympathetic nervous system pumping hormones and nervous energy which can wear out our adrenal system and cause blockages to build in the body. Letting go and soothing allows the parasympathetic system to relax the nerves and restore the adrenal system; washing away the blocks and realigning us with God's energy flow. The more we can learn to let go of fears/traumas/heavy feelings, the more innate healing flows in.
- Listen to your body. God created it in a marvellous way. It sends us messages and pares back energy and brain power to meet situations of need. It opens these up again as soon as it trusts there's capacity. We can't rush the body's pacing but we can trust in its programmed ability to heal and restore. This is a symptom-led recovery, in contrast to following a rehab programme.
- The slower the recovery, the faster the healing. Listening to your body, moving forward a tiny bit at a time, allows your neural and physical system to move forward together and heal comprehensively, without shocking the system. Rushing the process results in setbacks. An excruciatingly long process does not mean it won't end.

The strategies and treatments below all relate to these principles of rebalancing, God's constant energy flow, letting go and listening to the body.

Mental Strategies

- Mindfulness. Soothing the body. Learning to let waves of feelings (despair, fear, misery) come and go through breathing. Most of the journey with fatigue or pain or trauma is learning to calm the rest of the system that it is safe to go through these things. Calm breathing feeds back to the brain that this emotion or experience is safe, and allows the parasympathetic nervous system to relax the body and begin self-healing. We can't control or choose the first feeling that comes up, but we can learn to let it go through calm breathing and stop the cycle of escalating panic. Mindfulness is a powerful tool for doing this, as well as aiding a person to get comfortable with the 'Will I ever recover' fear. Use recordings, apps, programs or a therapist to learn how. Click here for an example by Dr Hanna Isaacson [Hanna Let Go.m4a](#)
- Meditation daily inflow. Closing the eyes, imagining a waterfall of energy and healing from God refreshing and rejuvenating each organ, system and body part. 10-15 mins. More than any other strategy, this gives a tangible connection to God's flow of healing that leaves a person deeply refreshed.
- Sitting in the sun. The sun has healing powers and relaxes mind and body like nothing else. Catch whatever sun you can whenever you have energy to sit outside. Go on holiday in your own living space :)
- Fulfilment, not achievement. Focusing on joy, love, comfort, memories, peace, contentment... rather than progress which is out of your control. Have a 'to be' list, not a to do list.
- Joy list. Cultivating hobbies that don't take energy such as listening to music, adult colouring, sticker books, watching art programs, etc. Hobbies release stress and tension which helps the healing.
- Neural reset through affirmations. Long recoveries like this are a chance to rewire the beliefs your body is holding about yourself. This allows for powerful and beautiful healing and is an opportunity most don't get in their lifetime. Chronic conditions are generally connected to previous trauma. See treatments below.
- Problems are not in your way. Problems ARE your way. Whatever comes up in your recovery (joint pain, depression, anxiety, weak areas in the body, fears) it's an opportunity to reset and heal that block and move forward with better. Once each problem heals then we get there, and this does happen with time and soothe and external help if needed.
- Staying healthy in your head. Some find support groups helpful. Others find talking to recovered people the only hopeful thing. Keep affirming that you're healthy, your body is paring back to meet the situation, and it will regain when it's ready. This is a temporary, though long and excruciating recovery. Long processes end too. The body naturally recovers, if there's no blocks in the way. It's designed to self-heal. Part of the recovery is figuring out and releasing the blocks in your way as they come up.
- You only have to manage this moment right now. Not all the ones you're thinking of facing, crashing down on you in despair in your trembling state. Go back to now. Just breathe through it. You only have to manage this moment right now.
- Self-compassion. Walk around saying, 'This is so hard. This is incredibly hard. It's so awful I'm in this state. It's so hard I can't do what I need/want to. It's natural to feel awful. It's ok that I'm not ok. It's just too hard.' Self-compassion and acceptance reduces threat for the nervous system and paradoxically allows more wellbeing to enter. 'The compassionate nurturer' is a psychological concept where you bring along an imaginary comforting figure

(eg. An Angel or family member) during moments of difficulty to comfort you or do things with you.

- Own your journey. Only you know what balance you're juggling (fatigue, a family, anxiety, grief, misery, fear). Only you know what you're able to cope with. Well-meaning people (particularly those who don't understand it's a long process of rest in conjunction with rehab) will try to push many suggestions on you in desperation to help you. You have the right to decide what to try, and what to discard as not possible now, or not appealing to your own cost vs benefit weigh-up. Just because a treatment transformed someone else, does not mean it's the right thing for you. The most important component for healing is soothing mind and body. Whatever complements that is great and whatever adds pressure/requires too much energy/triggers too much anxiety can be set aside for later or for never. You are the expert on what you need. Go at your own pace. Do not jump to anyone else's tune. Take your time over a beautiful healing process. Take all the time you need. Own your journey.

Physical Strategies

Managing Fatigue

- This recovery is rest-based, with rehab zones when there's available energy. Rest brings the energy to move up to the next level. WAIT for the capacity to arrive before you try the next thing. You cannot push forward without listening to your body. Chronic fatigue clinics often advise rest of six months or more before trying any rehab or forward movement at all. The mental strategies above facilitate the resting and slowly bring in greater capacity.
- Pace your way. Do a bit, go and rest. Do a bit, go and rest.
- Relax the mind by recognising that your body is helping you. Panic, fatigue, high temperature and high pulse rates are all examples of a healthy body meeting the situation needed. The body puts us into states to facilitate recoveries. Fatigue allows it to deal with an overflow of post-viral toxins. High temperature speeds up our metabolism and kills off viruses. High pulse rate sends more oxygen round the body when needed. Panic is the body's short-circuit defense when the mind is too overwhelmed.

The body and mind are amazing at redirecting and cutting off energy when needed for a particular survival. Think of cold fingers in the winter. The body cuts off some of the blood supply to the fingers to send more blood to warm your important organs. So too, the hypothalamus in the brain pares back energy and brain power during fatigue states, and those will come back when the need has passed. This is a temporary state and it is reversible.

- The physical pulls down the emotional. When you're in a dip, it's accompanied by misery. Think the misery that accompanies a flu. The body sends out depressing hormones and cytokines to slow down your system and keep you in bed so it can work on healing. This has a side effect of even extra misery (often the worst part) which will pass as the dip passes.
- Follow your circadian rhythm. Eg. If you're shakier and weaker in the mornings, as much as possible don't allow or arrange anything in that time. My day ran from 3-7pm.
- Sinking into your symptoms. The quicker you allow your symptoms to take over you (eg. a post-exertion malaise, PEM), the quicker they pass. It feels scary when it comes. But sinking into it brings the healing. Your body is putting you into that state to deal with something. So let go into that state to allow it to bring the healing. Fighting the PEM or the trigger doesn't allow the body to get what it needs and re-energise. The body knows what to do to rebalance. We just have to let it.
- Joint pain is a common fatigue symptom. It is often not a reflection of damage, just another symbol of a sensitive nervous system that is overtaxed and overprotective. Pain can flare from any physical or emotional stress. It needs the same treatment as fatigue... rest and soothe till the pain goes and there's capacity to try strengthening in the process below.

Managing Progress

- 10%, then 5%. Increase your activity by 10% once you feel you have capacity. Eg. Try two repetitions of a new exercise. If it triggers a fatigue or pain flare, REST till the fatigue or pain has passed (however long it takes. It will always pass). You may even need to expect a fatigue or pain flare as you climb a new barrier. This is why we trial progress as minutely as possible.
Once the flare has passed, try again half of what you trialled. Eg. One repetition. Keep halving your trial until you find a baseline that the body can do without pain or fatigue. This is your starting point. Stay at this level until you feel the body has accepted it easily. Then attempt the next exercise or step in the same manner.
- Building up excruciatingly slowly barrier by barrier teaches the body it's safe to progress. The beginning of any new recovery process is the slowest. 10% increases means as you move forward, you'll be able to increase by more too. A chronic fatigue/chronic pain physio can guide you through this process.
- Teaching your nerves safety. Along with 10% physical increases, the mind and body have to learn it's safe to increase. Eg. When starting walking after many months: stop on the first paving stone, repeat to yourself, 'It's safe for me to walk,' or, 'I'm deeply ok,' till you feel calm there. This may take a few trials over a few days. The next week, try 2 paving stones and say the same mantra till you feel calm. Keep increasing in this way, 10% at a time, with safety alongside.
- Whatever you feel you can do, do half of it. If you're highly adrenalised to try something, first go and rest or breathe slowly and get in touch with your tiredness level. This will help you determine if it's actually sensible to try it right now or rather be (horribly!) patient and just WAIT till genuine capacity comes. It will.
- Move the next available key. For example, if one's hip and neck are too painful to exercise, work your core. There is usually something, however small, available to progress. Try to find it and listen to your body's messages of what it's happy to move forward and when.
- Progress is not a straight line. Expect dips and setbacks whenever anything physical or emotional is too much. They are horrid and long and require listening to your body and resting till they pass. You'll go back to the point of progress before the dip when it's over. If you draw a line through the peaks of the recovery waves, you'll see the line is going up and up. It's direction, not speed, that counts.

Practical Strategies

- As the mother, narrow your priority focus towards emotional backing for your family wherever possible. Practical things, someone else can do. Being there for the hugs/questions/fears/encouragement is all you need to try and take care of. Psychologically, kids remember the perspective they received on trauma rather than the event itself. You can shape their memory towards good and their champion superpowers for managing tough situations.
- Helpers, cleaners. Where possible, pay older teenagers to be on hand for overwhelming times with children or housework or cooking. Keep asking leads to ask their friends till you find what you need. Payment ensures it's a job and they take it seriously. Some organisations, such as Hand in Hand or Gift in London, may be able to help with helpers or drivers.
- Queen of your room. Bring the centre of your house to your room. Do homework with kids from your bed. Read and colour with them there. Play gentle games like cards if you can. Spend individual time with each child where possible there. Use your phone to instruct your helper and stay in bed.
- Buy in food or ask for a meal rota. People are generally happy to shop or cook or drive for you. It takes courage to ask, but that's how you build a support network.
- Limit visitors to those sensitive people who will leave you feeling better not worse. To everyone else, plead rest. Even helpful visitors can be told in advance that you have limited energy and can only manage an (x) minute long visit. If they overstay, explain that you've loved having them, but you must rest now. A big part of the recovery is learning to respect your boundaries and needs and practise saying no even when it's extremely hard.
- Ask for financial support. Recoveries are expensive. Often one has to prioritise money for helpers, drivers, practitioners. If needed, are there charities or family members or friends who can give or loan you money? People want to help even though it's very hard to ask. The government may give some monthly support called Personal Independence Pay if you apply (ask someone to help you apply).
- Arrange company when facing overwhelming things. Call a friend to sit with you and research summer camps, or a helper to cook for festivals etc.

Spiritual Strategies

- It's the right time, not the right treatment, that brings the healing. You only have to do the treatments you CAN MANAGE. The rest is up to God. He can and does bring the healing through any medium, at the right time for you (Beis Haleivi on Bitachon). Often the process of healing is releasing the need for the condition slowing us down and forcing us to rebalance. Once this need has been released, God sends an easy access key or treatment to propel us forward.
- Processes like these with all their despair, fear and misery, build inner strength, courage and resilience for you and your children. It is good to wrestle with difficulty and find your inner power. Even though there's huge guilt regarding the rest of the family, they gain too. This was brought by God to all of you, not just you. They also need to go through it. They'll come out with crucial tools for the rest of their lives, and be better placed to face life's challenges.
- Let go to God and His pace. It is incredibly hard to relinquish control, but releasing to God the pressure to control and terror of illness provides a blissful soothe often previously unknown. We cannot heal ourselves. We can only facilitate the conditions for healing as best we can. God sends down healing and growth every day, and through soothing and resting we align ourselves with this flow and receive it into our bodies. His timing is perfect (Devarim 32).
- This fallow healing time where you can't do anything is equivalent to a Sabbath or a resting period for farmland. So take it! Many people long to be able to stop and rest. You are being forced to. Enjoy it, use it for healing and peace and contentment. Learn that you are loved even when you can't do anything for anyone. Learning to accept you're ok where you are is part of the process.
- Right here is your moment for greatness. This is exactly where you need to be, going through what you need, to squeeze out those diamonds. God protects us from everything unless there is benefit. If you are here, there is benefit here, and it's waiting for you to unlock (Devarim 8:16). Your darkest hours are your greatest growth. As soon as you don't need it anymore, it will lift.
- Chronic conditions can release a person from the pressure that they need to drive themselves to do things to 'keep God happy' or 'keep Him protecting me'. We see that we can't do anything for Him and still the healing and peace flows down every day. This experience can give faith in God's unconditional love and protection and the concept that all He wants is for us to just do the best that we can.
- Moving from the gift to the Giver. The gift is health, but God is the Giver. If He's shaking your health, it's only to move you somewhere better. When the body is stilled, the soul is called on to climb levels to better bliss and faith. Anchor yourself with affirmations/posters on your wall such as 'God heals all physicality' (from the blessing Asher Yatzar) which gives you faith in the Giver and His unlimited ability to heal you. He wants you to emerge. That's why He made the body self-healing.
- The end healing goal would be balance. Learning your limits and boundaries and faith and self-love through healing. Applying them to wellness; finding a new balance integrating rest and soothe, with giving and doing. Respecting the fullness of who you are in a cycle of receiving and giving. (This is a concept in Kabbala relating to Mashpia/Mekabel)

The Science of Chronic Conditions

Chronic conditions arise when the body hasn't moved out of acute phase (infection fighting) and into resolution phase (healing and clearing). But the resolution mechanisms are still there! They just need to be activated.

Repair mode activates when the body and mind repeatedly experience safety and the body no longer feels like it has to keep fighting something.

From my experience and research, there are four main components to switching on repair stage. The strategies explored above relate to these four. Attempting any example of any component puts you on the way to healing 😊

1. **Soothing; Turning on the parasympathetic (healing) nervous system:**
E.g. breathing, sunlight, hobbies, fulfilment, self-compassion, rest.
2. **Desensitising a high-alert nervous system:**
E.g. by excruciatingly slow progress, pacing, listening to the body
3. **Debris clearance of toxins left from the infection phase:**
E.g. lymphatic drain massage, nutrition, gut health, infection control, rest
4. **General neural safety:**
E.g. trauma release, rewiring internal beliefs, positive affirmations, spiritual anchoring

Treatment Options

The treatments below are all forms of boosting the body's natural healing or strengthening mechanisms. Trial treatments when there is energy and capacity for them. Resting and soothing the system in months prior to treatments, or alongside them, generally speeds up their effectiveness. It took me a year and a half before I could try any of them, and once started they had to be paced over weeks or months. Keep the overall journey in mind.

- The Perrin Technique. This is a form of osteopathy which believes stuck toxins in the body's drainage system are stopping normal recoveries, causing chronic fatigue. Through months of daily self-massage and regular osteopathy, the lymphatic system is cleared of these blocks and normal recoveries and energy levels resume.
- Neural re-wiring. Many practitioners such as Louise Hay groups or self-help books will take you through a process of releasing old beliefs your body is holding (eg. I am weak and life is unsafe for me) and creating new affirmations with positive, beautiful beliefs to move forward with (eg. I am beautifully balanced. Life is kind and safe for me. I am totally healthy). As you repeat these affirmations, these beliefs start becoming your reality over time. Many programs are based on forgiving the past events which formed your old beliefs, and finding self-love through self-acceptance and new beliefs.
- Trauma healing. EFT, EMDR, and other techniques done alone or with a competent therapist (make sure someone can personally recommend or verify them) can be powerful releasers of whatever memory might be holding the body in fight/flight/freeze and prevent it from naturally recovering and moving forward. The body can then choose to respond differently to that memory.
- Physiotherapy. Make sure to find or have someone find the right type for you by talking to different practices and explaining your condition. There are chronic fatigue specialists and respiratory specialists for breathlessness. Non-specialist sports or MSK physios may not understand the processes needed and may trigger setbacks, as this is not a standard rehab.
- Nutrition. There are practitioners who understand long covid and can help support energy. Electrolyte sports mixes and energy/protein drinks, as well as vitamins and minerals can be helpful for providing energy boosts.

Contacts & Resources

The following contacts have been personally used or recommended by people I know.

- <https://www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk/> very good practical overview
- <https://theperrintechnique.com/> for the Perrin Technique. This website gives practitioners in different countries. Sophie King is a UK practitioner of the Perrin <http://osteoclinics.net/>
- Jolene Sher of <https://boostphysio.com/> is an MSK physiotherapist with special interest in chronic fatigue and chronic pain, who educates and understands how to manage the conditions
- Dalia Nessim of <http://physiocliniclondon.com/> for respiratory physiotherapy for breathlessness
- Dr Hanna Isaacson of <https://hannaisaacson.co.uk/> for a wonderful therapist versed in mindfulness and trauma
- 'You can Heal Your Life' book by Louise Hay, neural rewiring
- Kaley Zeitouni, illness recovery coach, who healed herself from MS; neural rewiring - www.kaleyz.com
- Sam Lyons, Hypnotherapy. Excellent for joint inflammation and rewiring the nervous system's response patterns to pain or threat. Hypnotherapybysam@googlemail.com
- Ria Abras, functional medicine and nutritional therapist, who said to me in a one-off chat, 'There's loads of evidence someone in your position can completely recover.' Uses a holistic lens to help balance the body. www.riconnect.me
- Dr Michelle Braude, medical nutritionist, excellent general or tailor made plans to support your body's energy through nutrition. www.thefoodeffect.co.uk
- Ben Crowe, mindset coach, lots of media on the concept of fulfilment rather than achievement and owning your story.
- Lorimer Moseley, explaining pain and how it represents neural fear and is not necessarily damage-driven. Plenty of videos on YouTube and similar.
- The Highly Sensitive Child- Book by Dr Elaine Aron, explaining the principles of under-arousal that's needed to rebalance and restore an overtaxed neural system.