

Why am I feeling so tired?

Have you wondered why you're feeling more tired than normal since the start of the pandemic? Some of you will undoubtedly be working longer hours but neuroscience is telling us that it could also be due to the allostatic load. This is the wear and tear on our bodies from living in a constant state of stress response – this is where the brain detects a stressor and tells the body to release chemicals such as adrenaline and cortisol, increasing the glucose in our blood leading to the fight or flight response. There are things we can do to reduce the allostatic load, try some of the suggestions below.

Avoid the sugar fix!

When running in survival mode our bodies crave a quick fix fuel i.e. sugar, often in the form of biscuits, cake and chocolate. This can add to the sluggish feeling so try and avoid or keep intake to a minimum.

Build in exercise

Exercise 'mops up' excess stress in the body - studies show light to moderate exercise lowers cortisol levels and reduces allostatic load. How could you build more movement into your day?

Reframe negative thoughts

Challenge any negative thoughts you have and reframe them more positively. So instead of thinking 'I'm fed up of not being able to hug family/friends' you can reframe it to 'I'm keeping my distance to keep my friends and family safe'.

Keep up your hobbies

The most psychologically helpful hobbies are those that give a sense of control and competence e.g. craft activities. The science tells us that if we create the illusion that we're in control our brain perceives that there's no need to be so anxious.

Set yourself daily tasks

Set 2/3 small goals each day (at home or work), ticking them off gives a sense of achievement, plus bringing some order to your immediate world can offset the wider sense of disorder and lack of control.