

Know Your Brain:  
Neuro-fatigue

# Neuro-fatigue: Your Brain Gets Tired!

Neuro-fatigue is a symptom of a brain injury in which mental energy is exhausted after a short time.

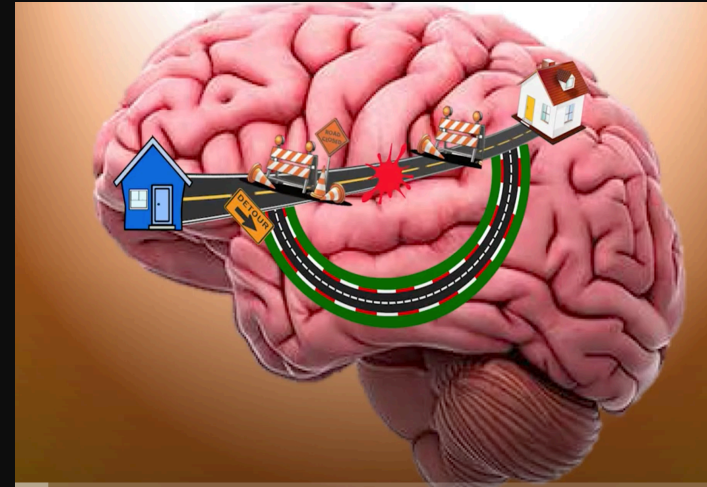
- Mental energy is consumed through:
  - Thinking
  - Learning
  - processing information
  - watching a lot of TV
  - spending time in front of a computer
  - interpreting the behavior of others
  - thinking logically.



# Why does Neuro-fatigue occur?

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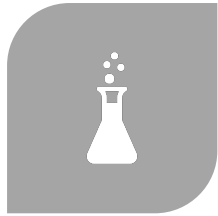
- People with brain injury often must use more parts of the brain, because the injured areas must be by-passed as brain cells try to communicate with each other to complete a task
- 



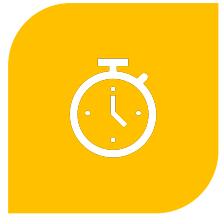
# As a result



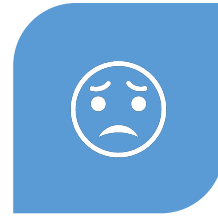
EMOTIONS  
CAN BE RAW



SLOW  
REACTIONS



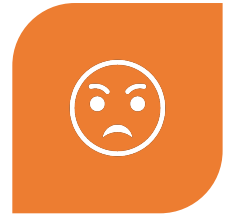
DELAYED  
PROCESSING



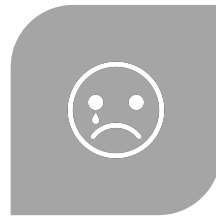
PHYSICALLY  
TIRED



MENTALLY  
TIRED



FRUSTRATED



DEPRESSION

### A Healthy Brain's Battery

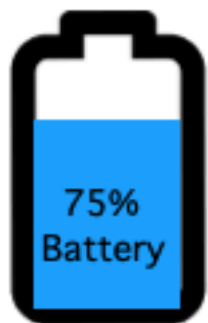


Good Morning!



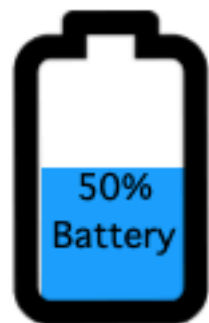
Daily  
Mental  
&  
Physical  
Activity

Afternoon



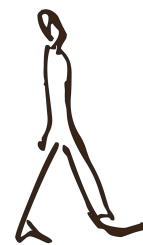
More Daily  
Activity

Evening

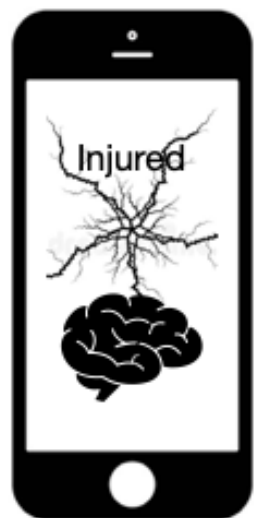


More Daily  
Activity

Night



### An Injured Brain's Battery

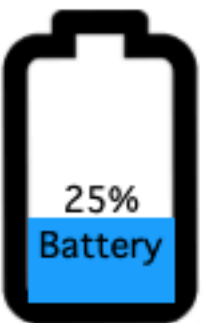


Good Morning!



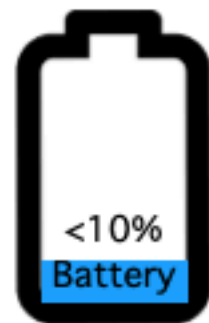
Daily  
Mental  
&  
Physical  
Activity

Afternoon



More Daily  
Activity

Evening

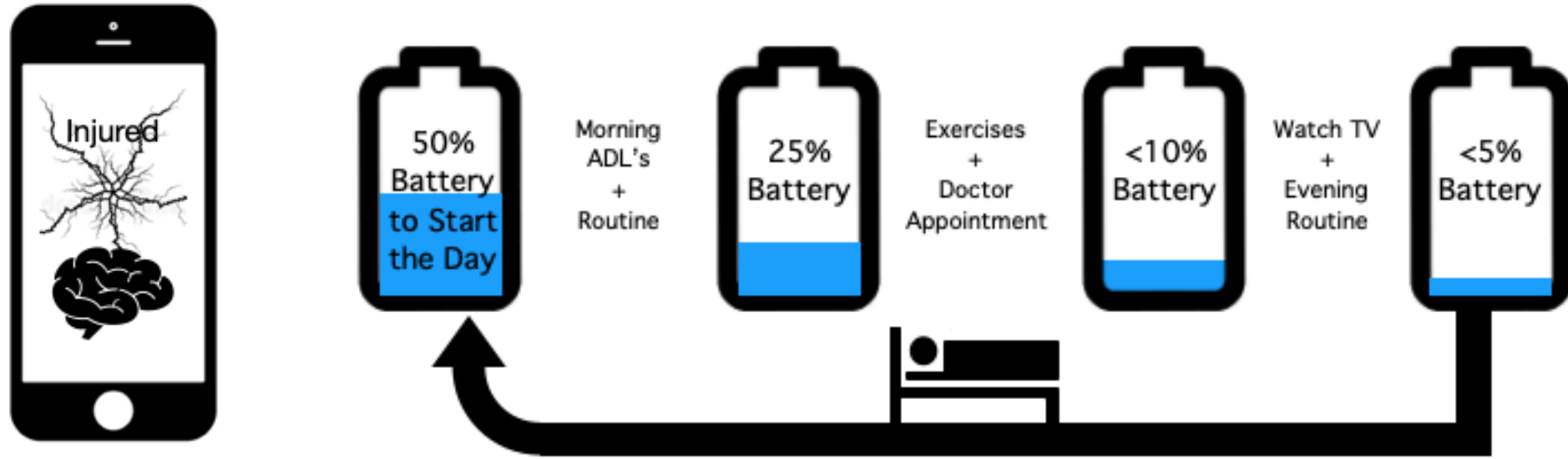


Night

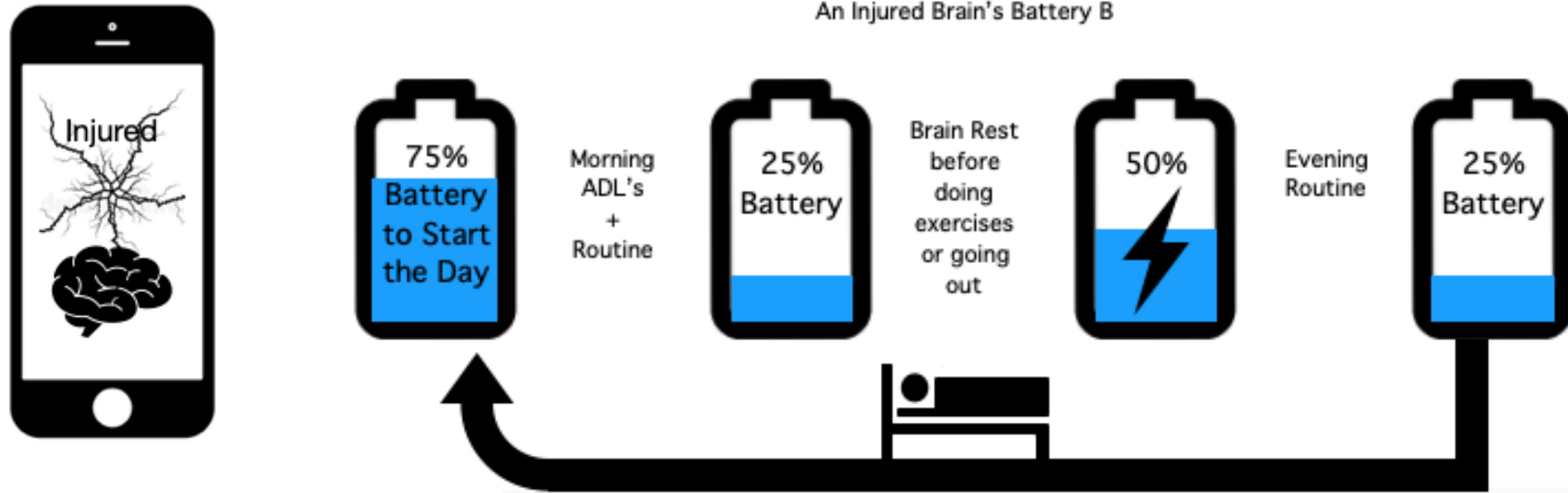


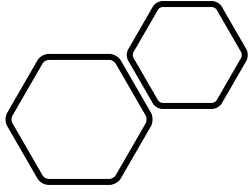


An Injured Brain's Battery A



An Injured Brain's Battery B





# Managing Neuro-Fatigue



## STEP 1

Recognize you do not have the same physical and mental stamina you had before the brain injury

## STEP 2

Become more aware of your limits  
(when is your battery low)

## STEP 3

Make a plan by scheduling time to:

- Sleep well- at least 8 hours
- Have Frequent breaks between activities
- Brain Rest Activities
- Eat a nutritious meal

# Step 1: Recognizing Signs of Fatigue



• "Often it can creep up. It may not be so noticeable until you reach a crunch point where you become aware that... I just can't deal with this anymore, or you can't think straight."

- Yawning
- Eyes feeling heavy
- Fidgeting/getting irritable
- Limbs feeling heavy
- Stomach feeling sick
- Head feeling "fuzzy"
- Losing concentration/attention



## Step 2: Triggers to Fatigue

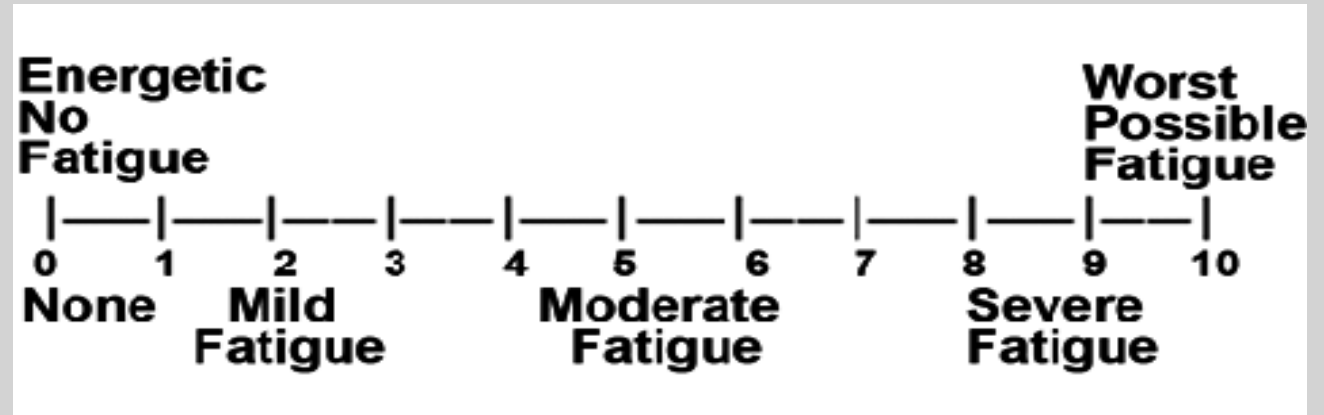
- Working at a computer
- Dealing with paperwork/correspondence
- Being in a busy environment like a grocery store
- Concentrating on one conversation in a noisy place like a restaurant
- Driving or catching public transportation



# Identify Triggers



- Make a plan to work out what your personal triggers are
  - Rate how tired you feel before and after different activities
- Use a 1-10 visual scale
- This will give you an idea on which activities are more fatiguing for you



Things that  
make  
Neuro-fatigue  
worse

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Excess background noise

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Overstimulation

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Over-working

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Lack of sleep

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Pushing through fatigue

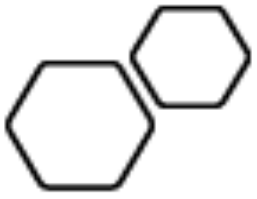




# Step 3: Managing Fatigue

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# Pacing



## Balance

Balance activities throughout the week

## Have

Have regular rest breaks

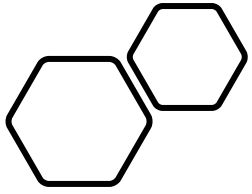
## Plan

Plan your time and stay organized

## Prioritize

Prioritize where to use your energy

- What activities are most important
- Which activities can you delegate to someone else
- Could you do any activities less often
- Schedule your week



# Sleeping



## Power Naps

- Avoid sleeping for longer than 30 min during the day
- Sleeping after 4pm disrupts your sleep/wake cycle

Establish a regular routine of going to bed and getting up at the same time

Establish relaxing activities and environment before bed

Avoid watching TV in bed

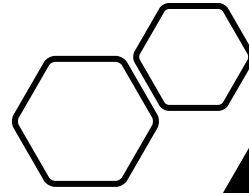
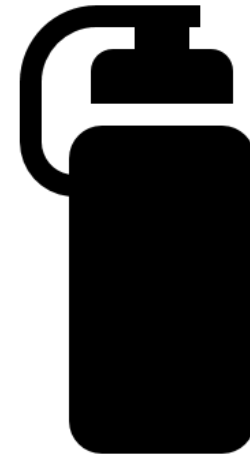
Avoid exercising within three hours of going to bed

Avoid having tea, coffee, soda, or other caffeinated beverages after 4 pm

What are you  
Hydrating your  
body with?

DO drink water

DON'T drink caffeine  
(tea, coffee, fizzy  
drinks)



# Nutrition is Vital

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Avoid the “Sugar Crash” by minimizing your intake of sugary foods (sweets, sugar cereals, white bread)

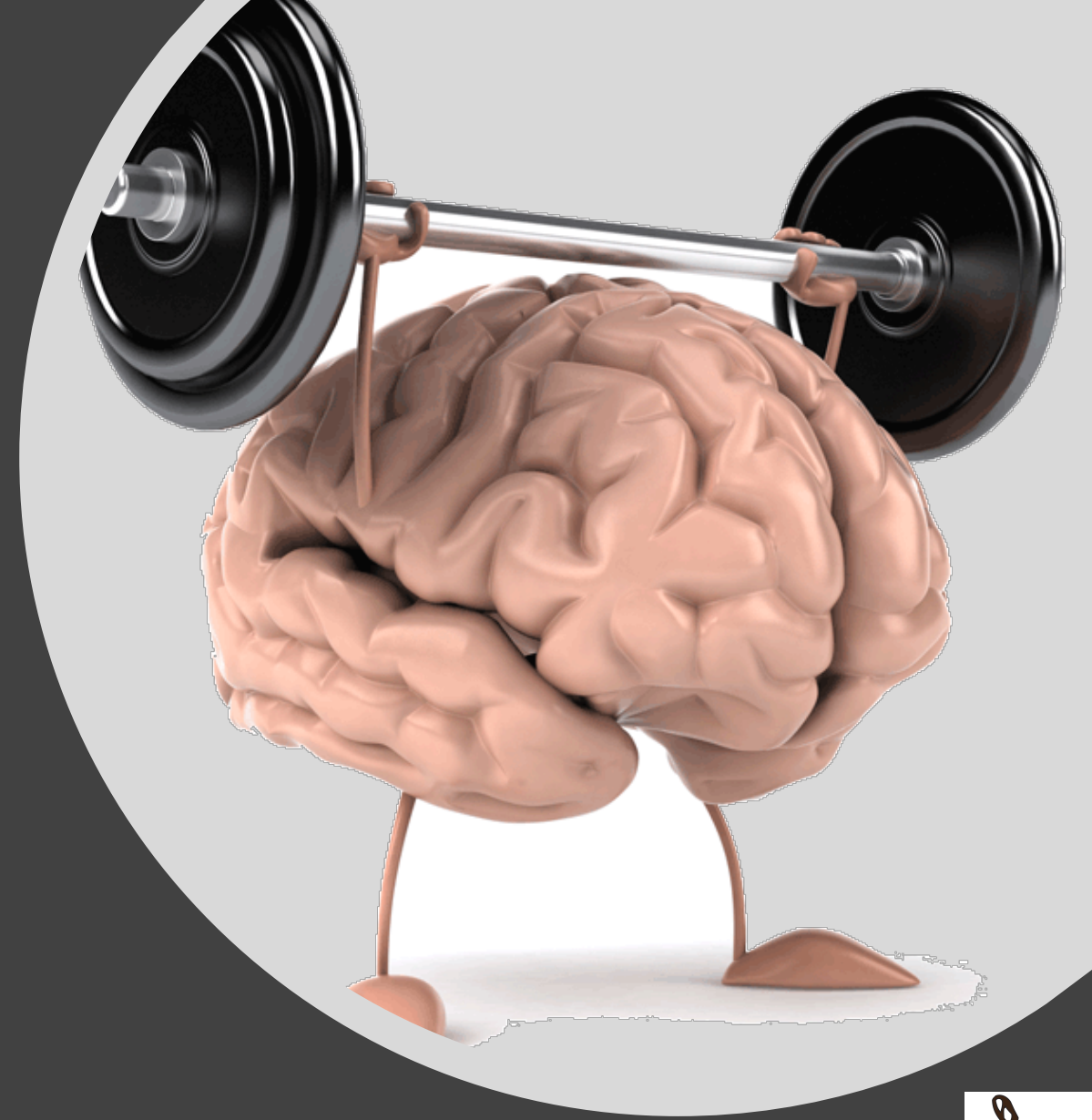
Work on balancing your diet with proteins, good fats/oils and carbohydrates that can improve your overall brain health





# Cognitive Strategies

- Use a checklists to stay on track
- Schedule your time using a planner or [schedulebuilder.org](http://schedulebuilder.org)
- Use alarms to prompt you to stay on task or take breaks
- Do one thing at a time
- Write notes or Post-its as reminders rather than trying to hold something in mind
- Use cue cards to act as reminders
- Break things into steps



# Brain Rest Activities

- Listen to soft relaxing music
- Meditate
- Power nap
- Listen to audiobooks or podcasts
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Look through photo albums
- Deep breathing
- Relax on the porch or a quiet space outside

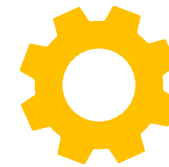


# Take Away Points



Recognize Signs of Fatigue

Know the Triggers



Take a Brain Rest

All photos from presentation have been linked with source. Click the blue arrow on the photo to be redirected to the source.

