



Reablement and tiredness

How they can exist together

Wellness and reablement is all about 'doing with', not 'doing for', your client. But it can be hard to motivate and find the right approach for people who report feeling tired all the time.

This is when you might hear, **'Can't you just do it for me?'**

Tiredness in older age

While tiredness is often blamed on getting older, it can be related to decreased activity levels. And though some people think it's normal to be inactive in older age, it's not!

Being inactive causes loss of fitness for everyday living, which makes people feel tired.

Encouraging your client to do activities with you can improve their strength and fitness while preventing decline. However, it's important to approach this carefully – the suggestions in this resource can help.

Caution: Tiredness can have other causes, such as poor sleep, health conditions, medications, or pain. If your client reports any of these issues, advise their coordinator.

Who are these suggestions suitable for?

These suggestions will suit clients who have lost fitness for daily activities after minor illness (for example, a urinary tract infection) or a period of reduced activity.

They're not suitable for people with serious illnesses, medical events, or significant pain. Seek advice from a medical or allied health professional in this situation.

What everyone (including your clients) should know about activity and health

- Movement is medicine! Embrace as many opportunities to move as you can.
- Older people can improve their wellbeing and fitness for daily living.
- This can be achieved through small consistent efforts in everyday life.

Tips for balancing reablement with tiredness

How can you support a client to be active (but not too active) when they're often tired?

Positive attitude

- Focus on what the person can do, not what they can't, for example: 'Last week, you were able to cut up all the vegetables without help'.
- Encourage them to think about what might be possible, for example: 'If your walking keeps improving, you could visit your neighbour like you used to'.
- Remind them that they can improve by doing a little bit often, and that you'll be there to offer support every step of the way.
- Celebrate all the wins, no matter how small!

Plan

- Break down the activity into smaller steps.
- Agree on the steps you and your client will do before starting. They'll feel more confident if they know what to expect.
- Together, work out how to manage their tiredness during the task.

Prepare

- Get all the equipment ready before your client starts the activity to help conserve their energy.
- Prepare the environment for rest. For example, if they need to sit to rest, bring a chair to the activity area before starting.

Pace

- Your client doesn't have to do the whole activity to benefit. Doing any part of the activity is better than nothing.
- Encourage them to take a break before they need to. They shouldn't be active to the point of breathlessness or exhaustion.
- Short, frequent breaks are best for maintaining energy throughout a task.
- Slow down! Moving quickly uses up extra energy and can make people anxious.
- They can build endurance over weeks or months by gradually reducing their rest breaks or increasing the amount of work they do in one go.

Provide reassurance and reflect

- Remind your client that it's okay to rest when they feel tired.
- Reassure them that you will help when they need it.
- Discuss the session and what you might do differently next time.



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