

10 Signs You Have Pandemic Fatigue and How to Cope

Months of stress and uncertainty take a toll on our emotional health

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The end of summer is now in sight but the end of the pandemic is not. Months of coping with the stressors of quarantines, social-distancing, shutdowns, losses, [grief](#), uncertainty, and [anxiety](#) are taking a toll on our emotional health. This *Pandemic Fatigue* is impacting our feelings, thoughts, and behaviors in negative ways which means there are steps we need to take to protect our well-being. To be clear, *Pandemic Fatigue* is not an official or a diagnosable condition—it is simply a term to describe the impact of [COVID-19](#) related stressors on our feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.

10 Signs of *Pandemic Fatigue*

1. You're not as diligent about wearing a mask or washing your hands.
2. You're less careful about social distancing than you were.
3. You're getting enough sleep but still feel exhausted.
4. You're feeling more impatient and more irritable.
5. Things are upsetting you that previously hadn't.
6. You're feeling [stressed](#) by tasks or situations you typically manage well.
7. You're not engaging in things you used to find enjoyable.
8. You're feeling hopeless about the future.
9. Your consumption of [alcohol](#), substances, or food has increased.

10. You're finding it harder to focus and concentrate.

What You Can Do to Reduce the *Impact* of Pandemic Fatigue

1. If you have been lax about sticking to behaviors like wearing a mask, washing hands, and social distancing, remind yourself that those habits are one of the few ways in which you can assert control in the situation. Doing these things will make you feel more empowered and less hopeless and they will also keep you and your family/community safer.

2. Instead of turning to food or substances to manage difficult feelings, identify and name the feelings you're trying to numb using this [feelings chart](#). Then practice sitting with these emotions so you develop a tolerance for them and are less inclined to 'escape' the discomfort they cause.

3. Speak to friends and loved ones who might be struggling with similar negative feelings to get validation and support and to share coping strategies.

4. Choose one of the activities you used to enjoy but have not engaged in recently. List three things you liked about the activity and then with those in mind, try the activity again to see if you can 'rediscover' it. Engaging in activities you used to enjoy is a good way to feel a sense of normalcy and reconnect to your sense-of-self. It can also be a good de-stressor that will then help your [concentration](#) and focus.

5. Let the people around you know you've been feeling irritable and impatient. Knowing you're out-of-sorts will allow them to understand why you might respond more sharply than usual and not take it too personally. Of course, do try to be mindful of taking out frustrations on those around you. Protecting your relationships in these and other ways is important because having closer connections with others will nourish you emotionally and buffer you against unavoidable stressors and challenging circumstances.