

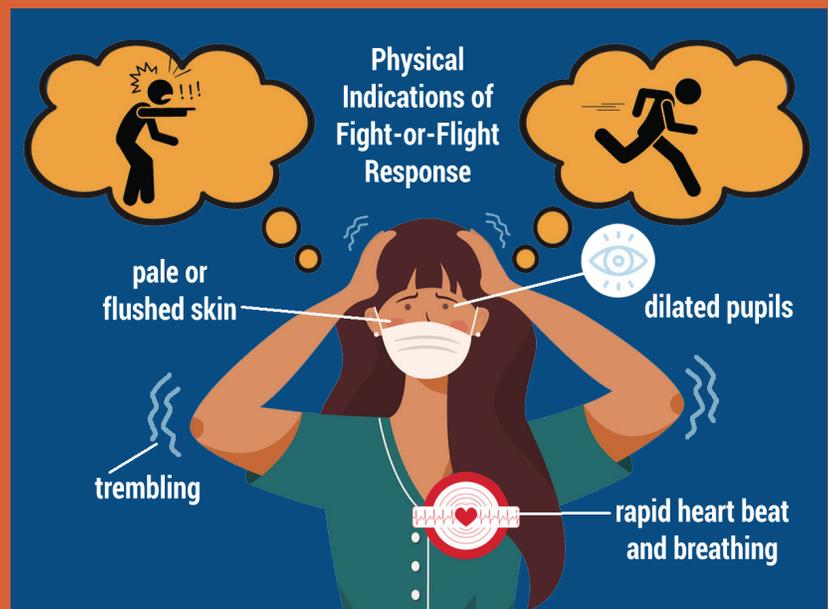
Conquering COVID-Related Mental Exhaustion

Mental exhaustion is a common reaction to long-term stress that can wreak havoc on your mind and body. Discover what's behind mental exhaustion and how you can get back on track.

It Starts with Fight-or-Flight

Fight-or-flight is a well-known reaction to being faced with something that's mentally or physically terrifying. The phrase is a nod to the choices our ancient ancestors made when confronted with danger in their environment. In the modern world, those dangers can be physical (like encountering a growling dog while on your morning run) or psychological (like getting ready to give a big presentation).

Normally, the stressors that trigger a fight-or-flight response are not long term or permanent, allowing us to rise to a significant challenge and then calm ourselves afterwards. But COVID-19 is not giving us that chance to reset. We're simply not built to handle this much stress without a break. The result is mental exhaustion.



Common Symptoms of Mental Exhaustion

- Feeling overwhelmed and powerless
- Feeling detached, apathetic
- Feeling unable to meet responsibilities and solve problems
- Irritability
- Low emotional resilience
- Physical fatigue
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Unexplained aches and pains
- Memory difficulties



Understanding your body's natural response to fight-or-flight is the first step toward managing mental exhaustion. Try these lifestyle changes to get back in control.

Take a Break

Even if you can't take a proper vacation right now, try clearing your schedule for a day or even just taking a few moments for yourself.



Exercise

Mental exhaustion can strip away your motivation to get moving. But when you're feeling overwhelmed, exercise is a powerful antidote. Try a brisk walk around the block, do a few planks or find a new online workout routine.



Try Relaxation Techniques

Yoga, tai chi, meditation and deep breathing exercises are known to lower cortisol levels in the blood, which reduce your risk of stress-related diseases.



Watch What You're Watching

Staying informed is important during the current pandemic, but too much information can stoke the fires of mental fatigue. Limit yourself to a few trustworthy news sources and consider how much time you're devoting to news stories. Be especially mindful about social media sites that spread disinformation.



Stay Physically Distant, Not Socially Distant

Use technology to stay connected with friends and family. Virtual meetups and friendly online groups can bridge the gap.



Ask for Help

Don't try to conquer the world on your own. Ask for help when you need it, and delegate tasks when you can.

