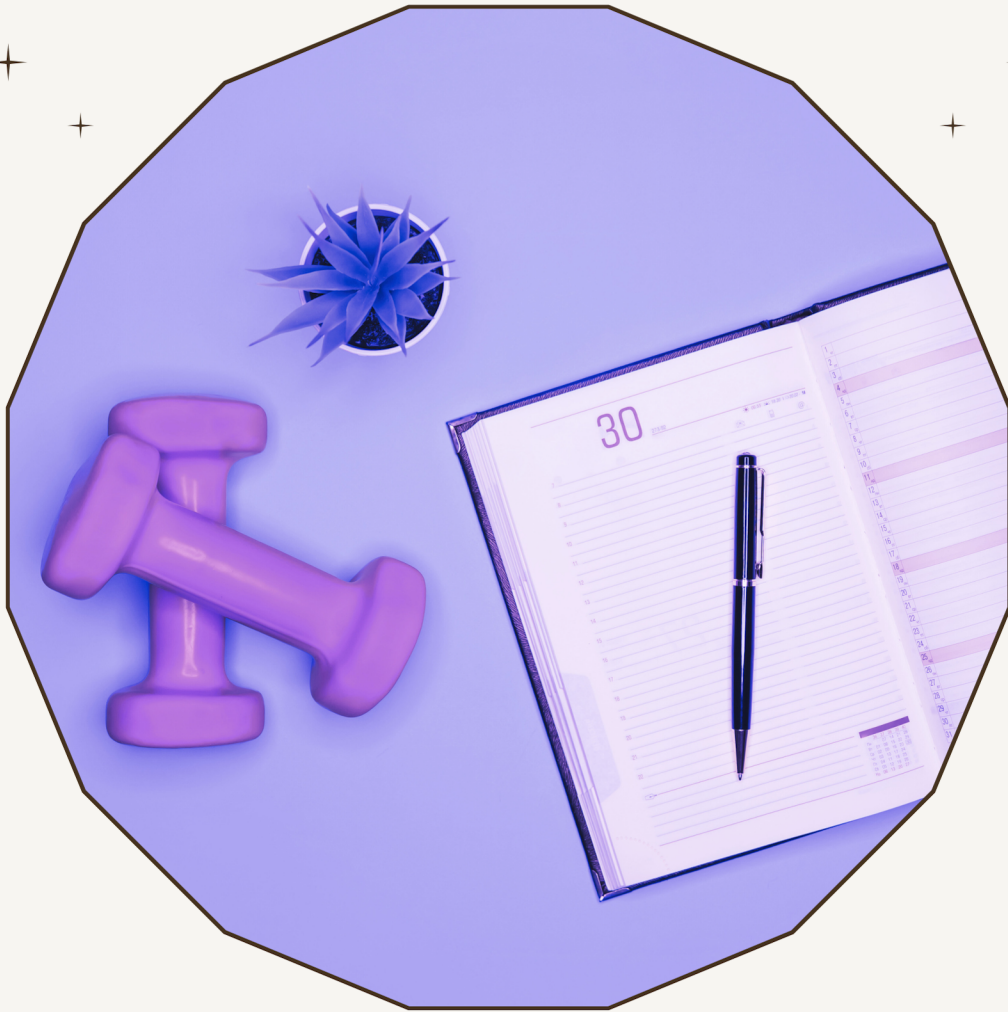


PACING GUIDE

For Long COVID Recovery



This guide provides information on pacing, a technique to manage your energy and improve your quality of life during Long COVID recovery.

INTRODUCTION

Living with Long COVID can be challenging, especially when managing your energy levels. This guide introduces the concept of pacing, a technique to help you conserve energy and improve your quality of life.



WHAT IS PACING?

Pacing is a strategy that helps you manage your activity level to avoid post-exertional malaise (PEM), a flare-up of symptoms after physical, mental, or even sensory activity.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ENERGY



Imagine your daily energy as a limited "energy rope." Long COVID can shorten this rope, so it's crucial to understand your current limits.

Types of Activities

PHYSICAL
(HOUSEWORK,
DRIVING)

COGNITIVE
(READING, WRITING)

EMOTIONAL
(SOCIAL OUTINGS)

SENSORY (LOUD
NOISES, BRIGHT
LIGHTS)

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ENERGY

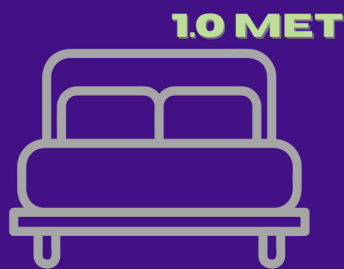


Energy conservation has been studied in other conditions, such as multiple sclerosis and Chronic Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS), to show improvement in physical quality of life, social functioning, and mental health.

To conserve your energy during your long COVID recovery, it's beneficial to understand the different categories of exertion based on METs (metabolic equivalents), which measure the amount of energy required for an activity.

Here is a chart to help you understand these categories:

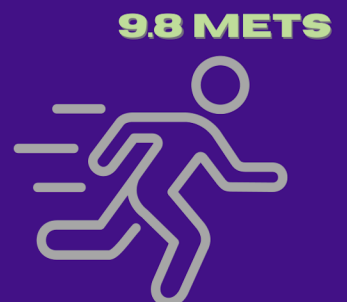
$$\text{*Calories per minute} = \frac{\text{METs} \times 3.5 \times \text{weight (in kg)}}{200}$$



Complete Rest
7 calories//5 min



**Walking
4.0 mph**
34 calories/5 min



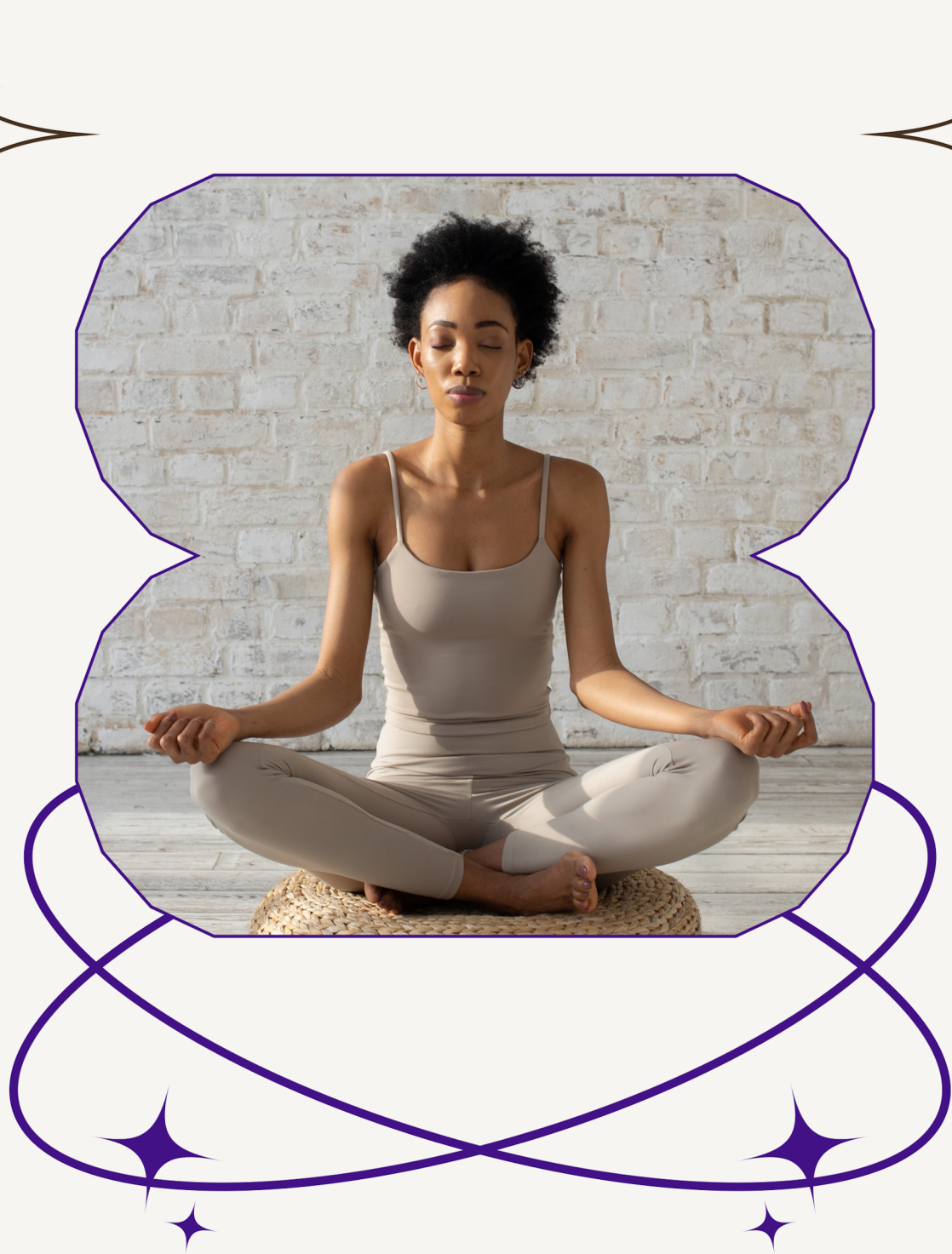
**Running
6.0 mph**
66 calories/5 min

During your recovery, your body requires additional energy to heal. This means you have less energy to spare for other activities. If you overexert yourself beyond your new limits, you may find that your symptoms flare up. Think of your daily available energy as an "energy rope."

During a strain on the body such as long COVID, your body utilizes more of your "energy rope," leaving you with a shorter portion of the rope for external demands. If you continue to push yourself beyond your limits, your body may not have enough energy to heal properly, and your recovery may stall or even regress. To avoid this, it's important to carefully gauge how much energy is available for your tasks each day.



You must be efficient and prioritize your activities to maximize the energy available. As you heal from long COVID, your recovery needs will demand less of you and allow for you to return to your usual activities gradually.



Pacing is a strategy that involves planning your day to allow you to complete tasks realistically while taking frequent breaks in between. This approach helps you to avoid overexerting yourself and includes breaking larger tasks into smaller, more manageable increments based on the task or time. For instance, you can start by taking a 10-minute rest after an hour of activity and adjust the timing as needed. Here are some tips to help you pace yourself effectively:

PLAN AND PRIORITIZE



Activity limits vary from one person to another and may even change over time. To identify patterns, consider keeping a printed or virtual symptom tracker.

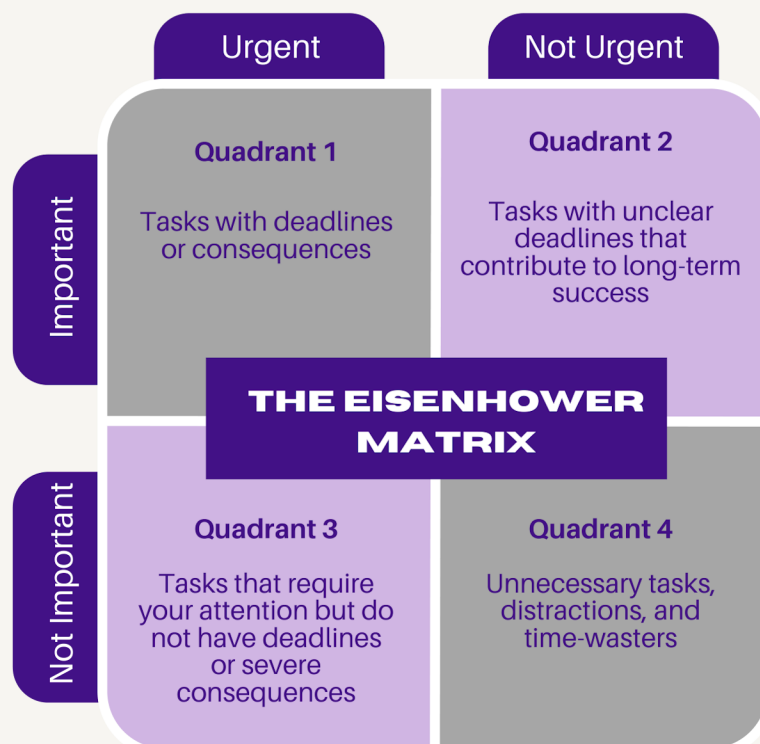
Additionally, wearable devices that monitor your heart rate can help you identify activities that increase your baseline resting heart rate range. You can measure your heart rate first thing in the morning before getting out of bed or later after sitting calmly for at least 4 minutes.

PLAN AND PRIORITIZE

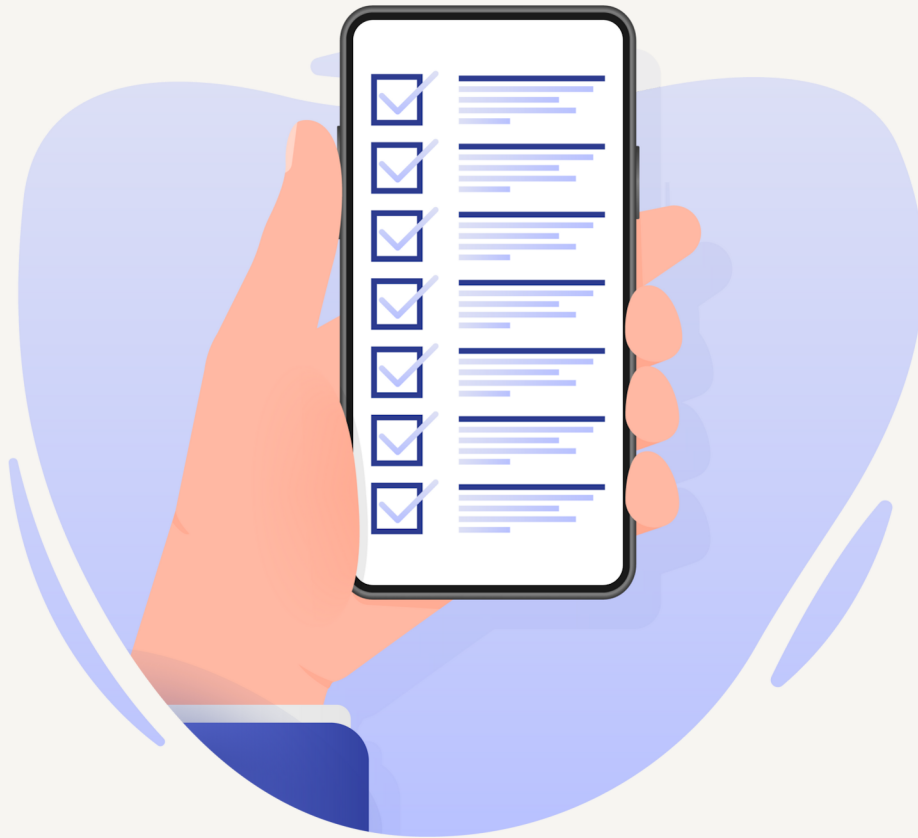
Here are some tips to help you figure out which tasks to tackle and the order in which to take them. First, you should focus on the tasks that are most meaningful to you. You can also use the Eisenhower Matrix to help you prioritize your tasks.

You can create your matrix at home, purchase it online, or use our online matrix if you have a CompendiRx subscription. To create the matrix, draw a 2×2 square and divide it into four sections using a pen. On the X-axis, write "Urgent" and "Not Urgent." Place each of your tasks for the day into one of the four squares to help decide how to manage it.

- Important and Urgent: focus on doing these tasks first.
- Important and Not Urgent: delegate or delay them for later.
- Not Important and Urgent: delegate these tasks.
- Not Important and Not Urgent: eliminate them.



PLAN AND PRIORITIZE



Additionally, there are several tools you can use to manage your schedule.

Tools you can use to manage your schedule include:

- Phone calendar.
- Google calendar.
- Reminders app.
- Paper planner.
- Daily to-do list.
- Home Calendar.

PACE

Find Your Rhythm: Alternate activity and rest periods based on what works best for you.

Efficiency is Key: Minimize energy spent during activities by delegating or eliminating unnecessary tasks.

HYGIENE

- Minimize standing: Sit while brushing teeth, washing hair, shaving. Consider a shower chair.
- Dry shampoo: Extend time between washes with dry shampoo when possible.

COOKING

- Sit and cook: Prepare meals while seated.
- Smart storage: Keep frequently used items within easy reach on countertops.
- Bulk cooking: Cook large batches, freeze portions for later use.
- Dishwasher: Use a dishwasher whenever possible.
- Organized storage: Lighter items on higher shelves, heavier items below.
- Waist-high storage: Frequently used items between waist and shoulder height.

DRIVING

- Calming environment: Turn off radio or play calming sounds.
- Shorter commutes: Plan errands strategically, consider carpooling/public transport.
- Delegate driving: Ask a friend/family member to drive or outsource errands.
- Proper posture: Sit close to wheel with knees bent, maintain good posture.
- Park close: Park closer to your destination when possible.
- Take breaks: Schedule breaks on long trips to get out and walk around.

HOUSEWORK

- Cleaning supplies: Distribute cleaning supplies throughout your home.
- Robot vacuum: Invest in a robotic vacuum cleaner.
- Daily shower spray: Use a daily shower spray to keep showers clean.
- Furniture polish: Use furniture polish to minimize dusting.

SHOPPING

- Delegate shopping: Delegate grocery shopping or use delivery services.
- Wrinkle-free clothes: Opt for wrinkle-resistant clothing, remove laundry promptly.
- Sit and fold: Sit down while folding and ironing clothes.
- Extra bedding: Keep a spare set of sheets and bedding in each room.
- Landscaping help: Consider hiring landscaping services or ask for help.

WORKING AT DESK

- Organize your workspace: Keep frequently used items within easy reach.
- Posture matters: Maintain proper posture while working.
- Minimize distractions: Create a quiet work environment, limit phone use/social media.

STANDING WORK

- Sit when possible; Posture for standing: Maintain proper posture while standing.
- Minimize exertion: Delegate tasks requiring reaching, pulling, etc.; Minimize distractions
- Ergonomic assessment: Consult with an occupational therapist for workspace height.
- Neck support: Use a cervical pillow or neck roll for added support while sleeping.
- Alternate positions: Try to alternate between sitting and standing throughout the workday.

MISC.

- Lay out clothes: Prepare your outfit for the next day before bedtime.
- Focus on single tasks: Avoid multitasking.
- Sensory overload: Consider avoiding events with loud noises, bright lights, or overstimulating visuals.

INTENTIONAL REST



To achieve true rest, you may need to rethink your perception of what it means to recharge. Simply finding a quiet place to sit and relax is not enough. Instead, try to engage in activities that will rest your mind, body, and senses.

Some examples include:

- Taking a nap
- Daydreaming
- Looking out at nature
- Deep Breathing
- Doing a Body Scan
- Engaging in Guided Imagery
- Guided Imagery
- Mindfulness Meditation
- Getting a Good Night's Rest

PERSEVERE



If you ever feel like giving up, remember that you are in control of your life and have the power to make things happen. You know yourself best, and it's important to keep in mind that your limits and priorities can change over time. Consistently reviewing your plan at least once or twice a week and making any necessary revisions will help you stay on track. This is a self-management tool that can help you regain your functioning and reach your goals. Always remember that you are capable of achieving great things and that taking care of yourself is the first step towards success.

AVOID NEGATIVE THINKING

It's normal to experience a range of emotions during your long COVID recovery. However, negative thoughts can actually make your symptoms worse by affecting pain signals in your body, impacting emotions, and decreasing your functioning. To combat negative thinking, try to focus on the positive aspects of a situation instead of the negative ones. For example, instead of seeing the glass as half empty, focus on reassuring thoughts that highlight the positive aspects of the situation. It can also help to surround yourself with positive and supportive people. Remember that you have the power to shift your mindset and improve your well-being. **We encourage you to use our platform, [Compendirx.com](https://compendirx.com), to help you stay empowered.**