

Mental Fatigue Scale, MFS

Name: _____

Date: _____

We are interested in *your present condition*, that is, how you have felt during *the past month*. When you are comparing your condition with “than before”, compare it with how it was before the injury or getting ill. Each question below is followed by four statements that describe: No (0), Slight (1), Fairly serious (2) and Serious (3) problems.

We would like you to place a circle around the figure before the statement that best describes your problems.

Should you find that your problem falls between two statements, there are also figures to indicate this.

1. Fatigue

Have you felt fatigued during the past month? It does not matter if the fatigue is physical (muscular) or mental. If you recently experienced something unusual (for example an accident or short illness) you should try to disregard it when assessing your fatigue.

0	I do not feel fatigued at all. (No abnormal fatigue, do not need to rest more than usual).
0.5	
1	I feel fatigued several times every day but I feel more alert after a rest.
1.5	
2	I feel fatigued for most of the day and taking a rest has little or no effect.
2.5	
3	I feel fatigued all the time and taking a rest makes no difference.

2. Lack of initiative

Do you find it difficult to start things? Do you experience resistance or a lack of initiative when you have to start something, no matter whether it is a new task or part of your everyday activities?

0	I have no difficulty starting things.
0.5	
1	I find it more difficult starting things than I used to. I'd rather do it some other time.
1.5	
2	It takes a great effort to start things. This applies to everyday activities such as getting out of bed, washing my self and eating.
2.5	
3	I can't do the simplest of everyday tasks (eating, getting dressed). I need help with everything.

3. Mental fatigue

Does your brain become fatigued quickly when you have to think hard? Do you become mentally fatigued from things such as reading, watching TV or taking part in a conversation with several people? Do you have to take breaks or change to another activity?

0	I can manage in the same way as usual. My ability for sustained mental effort is not reduced.
0.5	
1	I become fatigued quickly but am still able to make the same mental effort as before.
1.5	
2	I become fatigued quickly and have to take a break or do something else more often than before.
2.5	
3	I become fatigued so quickly that I can do nothing or have to abandon everything after a short period (approx. five minutes).

4. Mental recovery

How long do you need to recover after you have worked “until you drop” or are no longer able to concentrate on what you are doing?

0	I need to rest for less than an hour before continuing whatever I am doing.
0.5	
1	I need to rest for more than an hour but do not require a night’s sleep.
1.5	
2	I need a night’s sleep before I can continue whatever I am doing.
2.5	
3	I need several days rest in order to recover.

5. Concentration difficulties

Do you find it difficult to gather your thoughts and concentrate?

0	I can concentrate as usual.
0.5	
1	I sometimes lose concentration, for example when reading or watching TV.
1.5	
2	I find it so difficult to concentrate that I have problems, for example reading a newspaper or taking part in a conversation with a group of people.
2.5	
3	I always have such difficulty concentrating that it is almost impossible to do anything.

6. Memory problems

Do you forget things more often than before, do you need to make notes or do you have to search for things at home or at work?

0	I have no memory problems.
0.5	
1	I forget things slightly more often than I should, but I am able to manage by making notes.
1.5	
2	My poor memory causes frequent problems (for example forgetting important meetings or turning off the cooker).
2.5	
3	I can hardly remember anything at all.

7. Slowness of thinking

Do you feel slow or sluggish when you think about something? Do you feel that it takes an unusually long time to conclude a train of thought or solve a task that requires mental effort?

0	My thoughts are neither slow nor sluggish when it comes to work involving mental effort.
0.5	
1	My thoughts are a bit slow one or a few times each day when I have to do something that requires serious mental effort.
1.5	
2	My thoughts often feel slow and sluggish, even when carrying out everyday activities, for example a conversation with a person or when reading the newspaper.
2.5	
3	My thoughts always feel very slow and sluggish.

8. Sensitivity to stress

Do you find it difficult to cope with stress that is, doing several things at the same time while under time pressure?

0	I am able to cope with stress, in the same way as usual.
0.5	
1	I become more easily stressed, but only in demanding situations that I was previously able to manage.
1.5	
2	I become stressed more easily than before. I feel stressed in situations that previously did not bother me.
2.5	
3	I become stressed very easily. I feel stressed in unfamiliar or trying situations.

9. Increased tendency to become emotional

Do you find that you cry more easily than previously? Do you often burst into tears when, for example, you watch a sad film or talk with your family members? If you recently experienced something unusual (for example an accident or short illness) you should try to disregard it in your assessment.

0	I am not more emotional than I used to be.
0.5	
1	I am more emotional than other people but it is something that is natural for me. I start to cry or my eyes fill with tears easily, but only in relation to things that affect me deeply.
1.5	
2	My emotions are problematic or embarrassing. I sometimes even start to cry about things that mean nothing to me. I try to avoid certain situations because of this.
2.5	
3	My emotions cause me great problems. They disturb my day-to-day relationship with members of my immediate family and make it difficult for me to cope outside the home.

10. Irritability or “a short fuse”

Are you unusually short-tempered or irritable about things that previously did not bother you?

0	I am not more short-tempered or irritable than I used to be.
0.5	
1	I become more easily irritated, but it does not last very long.
1.5	
2	I become irritated very quickly about small things or things that do not bother other people.
2.5	
3	I react with extreme anger or rage, which I find very difficult to control.

11. Sensitivity to light

Are you sensitive to strong light?

0	I have no increased sensitivity to light.
0.5	
1	I sometimes experience problems with strong light such as sunlight reflected by snow, water or glass, or strong lights at home, but I am able to cope with it, for example by wearing sunglasses.
1.5	
2	I am so sensitive to light that I prefer to carry out my daily activities in dim light. I find it difficult to leave the house without sunglasses.
2.5	
3	My sensitivity to light is so strong that I am unable to leave the house without sunglasses. I keep the blinds (or equivalent) drawn at all times.

12. Sensitivity to noise

Are you sensitive to noise?

0	I do not suffer from increased sensitivity to noise.
0.5	
1	I sometimes have difficulty with loud noise (for example music, noise from the TV or radio or sudden, unexpected sounds), but I can deal with it easily by turning down the volume. My sensitivity to noise does not disturb my everyday life.
1.5	
2	I have a marked over-sensitivity to noise. I have to avoid loud noise or reduce it (for example by means of ear plugs) in order to cope with everyday life.
2.5	
3	My sensitivity to noise is so great that I find it difficult to manage at home despite sound insulation.

13. Decreased sleep at night

Do you sleep badly at night? If you are sleeping more than before at night, please place a circle around the "0". If you are taking sleeping tablets and sleep normally, please place a circle around the "0".

0	I do not sleep less than before.
0.5	
1	I have slight problems falling asleep or my sleep is shorter, lighter or more restless than before.
1.5	
2	I sleep at least two hours less than before and wake up frequently during the night without anything disturbing me.
2.5	
3	I sleep less than two to three hours per night.

14. Increased sleep

Do you sleep longer and/or more deeply than before? If you are sleeping less than before, please place a circle around the "0". N.B. Please take account of time spent sleeping during the day.

0	I do not sleep more than usual
0.5	
1	I sleep longer or deeper, but less than two hours more than usual, including naps during the day.
1.5	
2	I sleep longer or deeper. At least two hours more than usual, including naps.
2.5	
3	I sleep longer or deeper. At least four hours more than usual, and in addition I need to take a nap during the day.

Total score (1 to 14):

A cutoff score at 10.5 is suggested. A score above 10 implicates problems with mental fatigue and the person should consider the actual situation with work or social life.

15. 24-hour variations (for clinical use)

Do you find that at certain times of the day or night the problems we asked about (for example tiredness, lack of concentration) are better or worse? In the statements below, “regularly” means at least 3 to 4 days of the week.

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- | | |
|---|--|
| 0 | I have not noticed that my problems are regularly better or worse at certain times, or I do not have any specific problems. |
| 1 | There is a clear difference between certain times of the day. I can predict that I will feel better at certain times and worse at other times. |
| 2 | I feel unwell at all times of the day and night. |
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If you experience 24-hour variations:

When do you feel at your *best*? Morning Afternoon Evening Night

When do you feel at your *worst*? Morning Afternoon Evening Night