



Leeds Community Healthcare Trust
**MULTISYSTEM
REHABILITATION
SERVICE**



Fatigue management

Practical advice for people who have fatigue due to a long-term condition.



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4 Ps... Pace, Prioritise, Plan and Position

An easy way to remember fatigue management:

1. Pace

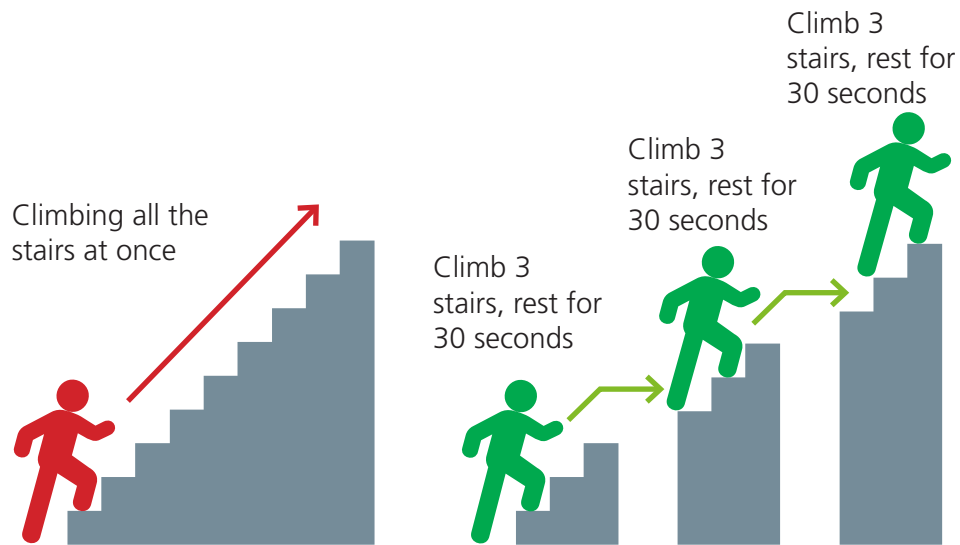
Pacing involves changing your thinking around completing tasks. To pace yourself, you may do a task more slowly or break it up with rests to prevent making your fatigue worse. You may also ask others for help in completing certain tasks. It includes spreading out the activities that you do more evenly over days.

Pacing can help you do more in your life. Pacing can be hard to start with but can help increase your activity levels in the long run.

If your battery is completely flat, it can take a long time to recharge. Try and stop before your battery runs flat by pacing - pausing to recharge/rest to add some charge throughout the day. Distribute your energy evenly throughout the day to prevent the need to fully recharge the battery.

Take your foot off the gas – doing things more slowly (and pausing to rest) is evidenced as a more efficient way of using energy. Much like a car will go longer and further at 30mph rather than 70mph.

Below is an example of pacing when climbing the stairs. Instead of climbing all the stairs at once, break this down with rest.



Outcome: You must rest for 10 minutes at the top and feel tired the following day

Outcome: You don't need a long rest at the top and don't feel so tired the following day

More information on how to pace yourself at end of booklet.

2. Prioritise

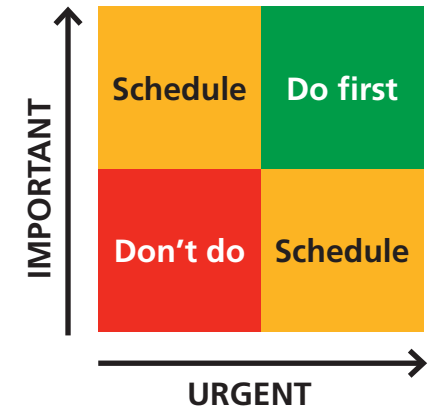
This involves identifying the most important tasks and activities and focusing your energy on those, while delegating or postponing less crucial tasks. Doing things we enjoy puts energy in the budget. The right amount of exercise, sleep, fun, nutrition, time in nature and relaxation are all important things to put energy back - to recharge.

Often when we are fatigued, things that we would normally deal with become overwhelming. We sometimes feel unable to cope. This sets off a negative cycle - the more overwhelmed you feel, the more fatigued you feel.

Essential tasks first: Focus on what must be done (e.g., meals, hygiene) and leave less urgent tasks for later.

Ditch or delegate: Let others help with non-essential tasks or postpone them.

Say no when necessary: Protect your energy by avoiding overcommitment.



3. Position

Think about your body position while completing tasks throughout the day. Bending and reaching can cause fatigue and shortness of breath. Try keeping objects in easy to reach places.

Consider doing important tasks on a perching stool rather than in standing, e.g. washing up to conserve energy to allow you to complete other tasks throughout the day.

Consider sitting to shower rather than standing if it makes you breathless.

Remember to change your position regularly to prevent stiffness and promote mobility.

4. Plan

Plan what you are going to do ahead to maximise your energy levels. For example, before showering, make sure your towel, clothes and necessary daily items are in the bathroom area.

Create a structured schedule: Plan each day with clear activity and rest periods. Use timers to limit activity.

Include rest: Plan for regular breaks and downtime, especially after more demanding tasks.

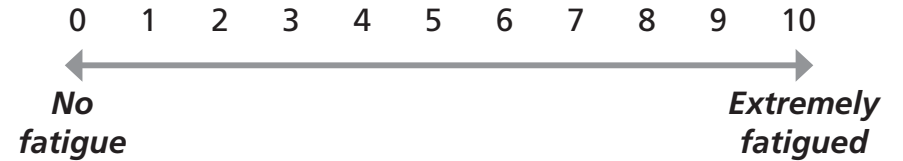
Use a weekly plan: Spread tasks throughout the week, keeping in mind your energy limitations.

TIP: Use a fatigue diary – see fatigue diaries at the back of this book to fill in.

Fatigue diaries can help you understand your energy expenditure and the impact on your body. They can also help you plan activities within your current energy budget.

We understand that fatigue diaries take energy to complete. However, if you feel you are being controlled by fatigue rather than feeling that you understand your energy patterns, these diaries can help you to get a better understanding of your fatigue.

When completing the fatigue diaries, we ask you to write what you have been doing throughout the day then score your fatigue on a scale of 0-10.



Analyse your fatigue diary

Study your fatigue diary and consider how much you want to do in the day. Ask yourself the following questions. You can discuss this with your family, friends or therapist:

How much energy do you have?	
What do you want/need to do?	
In what order?	
Can you alter any patterns in your fatigue diary?	
Are there any activities that make you feel especially fatigued?	
Are there particular times in the day you are most fatigued?	
Are you taking enough breaks? Are you taking them at the best time?	

Are you getting up and going to bed at the same time each day?	
Are you able to do activities that you enjoy?	
Are there any activities that you could delegate to others?	
Are there any activities that 'top up' your energy levels?	
Are you 'topping up' your energy levels throughout the day?	
What number should you let your fatigue reach before you rest?	
What are the barriers to change?	

Plan for rest as well as activity. Examples of restorative rest include soft, slow, low breathing, relaxation, being in nature, self-care, gentle exercise/stretching, good nutrition, whatever brings you joy.

A.D.J.U.S.T - an acronym for how to manage fatigue

A - Adjust

Adjust your expectations of yourself and what you can do now.

Remembering how things used to be; wishing and waiting for the fatigue to lift or alternatively pushing through irrespective of your energy budget, can contribute to the negative impact of fatigue.

D - Delegate

Ditch and delegate the things that aren't meaningful or pleasurable, leaving energy to **engage in valued activities**.

J - Judge

What is in my energy budget? How can I neither over nor under exert myself?

U - Understand

That fatigue is real. Even if you or others can't see it - The Spoon Theory on page 20 may help.

S - Savour

Savour the time you can spend doing the things you enjoy and make time to do them within your energy budget.

T - Talk

We often don't like being the one who is always complaining about how hard things are. Being able to speak to a professional or trusted friend will help give a different perspective.

It can be hard to see the wood for the trees when we are fatigued. Others may be able to spot ways that we can conserve and/or budget our energy more effectively.

As well as being helpful, this can also help us feel less isolated and better understood.

Assertive communication

Being assertive involves explaining your wants and needs in a way that is not rude to others but means they will understand how best to support you.

As fatigue is an unseen symptom, it can often fall on the person with fatigue to have to explain this to others. This includes being assertive about your needs. For example, a friend may wish to invite you for coffee, but that day you already have an appointment meaning you do not have the energy in your battery to do both. Saying no can feel uncomfortable and rude, so think how you can explain this in a positive way. For example, say:

'I would love to come for coffee tomorrow, however, my fatigue means that I will struggle to enjoy this fully as I already have an appointment that day. Would it be possible for later in the week?'

This can be difficult as you may need to repeat things like this regularly to friends and family, but remember, they do not know how best to support you unless you tell them!

Information and activities for fatigue management

Prioritisation activity

This activity will help you prioritise. Use different coloured highlighters or pens.

List **ALL** the activities you do in a typical week (or day).

Now work through your list highlighting in different colours:

1. Which activities are very important.
2. Which activities you would rather not do.
3. Which activities could be done less often.
4. Which activities do not need to be done at all.

Also ask yourself:

- Could any activities be done in a more energy efficient way?
- Could they be done at a different time?
- Could they be done less often, or for less amount of time?
- Can anyone or anything help you with these activities?

Plan

Consider how much you want to do in the day, how much energy you have and what you want/need to do and in what order. Plan for rest as well as activity. You can also use planning to spread your activities across the week. For example, if you have an appointment on Monday, then arrange to see your friend on a different day.

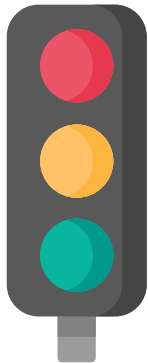
Consider using a timetable. This could be on paper, a white board or your mobile phone to help see how your activities are spread across the day/week.

How to pace yourself

Work out your baseline (what can you manage without increasing negative symptoms, at least most of the time). E.g. if you know that 20 mins on the phone with a friend may tire you then your baseline may be more around 10 - 15 minutes.

The traffic light system: This can be a strategy used to help you identify which activities are very demanding on your fatigue levels and which activities may be less demanding. Thinking about activities in this way can help you to plan your day.

Remember to consider the cognitive, emotional and social demands of activities, as well as the physical demands.



RED: Demanding activities

AMBER: Moderate activities

GREEN: Light / relaxing activities

Try to create a weekly schedule with some activities you need to complete in your day. Then colour code the activities specified in the traffic light system.

It is important to take regular rest breaks and use **green activities** to break up any consecutive periods of **red activities**.

Similarly, try and insert some amber and red activities into long stretches of green.

Make sure to prioritise - ask yourself, does this activity need to be done? Or could I delegate it to someone else?

An example of a balanced fatigue diary is on the next page (page 13).

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7-8am	Getting ready for work (Red) Rest (Green)	Getting ready for work (Red) Rest (Green)	Sleep (Green) Sleep (Green)	Getting ready for work (Red) Rest (Green)	Getting ready for work (Red) Rest (Green)	Sleep (Green)	Sleep (Green)
8-9am	Breakfast (Amber) Travel (Amber)	Breakfast (Amber) Travel (Amber)	Sleep (Green)	Breakfast (Amber) Travel (Amber)	Breakfast (Amber) Travel (Amber)	Sleep (Green)	Sleep (Green)
9-10am	Work (Red) TV (Green)	Work (Red) TV (Green)	Breakfast (Amber) TV (Green)	Work (Red) Rest (Green)	Work (Red) Rest (Green)	Breakfast (Amber) TV (Green)	Breakfast (Amber) TV (Green)
10-11am	Work (Red)	Work (Red)	Read (Green)	Work (Red)	Work (Red)	TV (Green)	Read (Green)
11-12pm	Work (Red) Lunch (Green)	Work (Red) Lunch (Green)	Walk (Amber) Rest (Green)	Work (Red) Lunch (Green)	Work (Red) Lunch (Green)	Laundry/ironing (Amber) Rest (Green)	Helping kids with homework (Amber) Rest (Green)
12-1pm	Work (Red)	Work (Red)	Email/bills/life admin (Amber) Lunch (Green)	Work (Red) Rest (Green)	Work (Red) Travel (Amber)	Lunch (Green)	Lunch (Green)
1-2pm	Travel (Amber) Rest (Green)	Work (Red) Rest (Green)	Lunch (Green)	Work (Red) Rest (Green)	Travel (Amber) Read (Green)	Rest (Green)	Rest (Green)
2-3pm	TV (Green)	Work (Red)	Relaxation (Green)	Work (Red)	Relaxation (Green)	Food shop (Amber)	Cleaning bathrooms/dusting (Amber)
3-4pm	School run (Red) Rest (Green)	Work (Red) Travel (Amber)	Hoovering (Amber) Shops (Red)	Work (Red) Travel (Amber)	School run (Red) TV (Green)	Social media (Green) Visit parents (Amber)	TV (Green) Call friend (Amber)
4-5pm	Relaxation (Green)	Rest (Green) Work from home (Amber)	Getting ready (Amber) Meeting friends for a meal (Red)	TV (Green)	Rest (Green) Helping kids with homework (Amber)	TV (Green)	TV (Green)
5-6pm	Cooking (Red)	Takeaway (Amber)	Rest (Green)	Cooking (Red)	Cooking (Red)	Yoga (Green)	Swimming (Red)
6-7pm	Rest (Green) Washing up/cleaning (Amber)	TV (Green) Helping kids with homework (Amber)	Rest (Green) TV (Green)	Rest (Green) Washing up/cleaning (Amber)	Rest (Green) Washing up/cleaning (Amber)	Relaxation (Green) Cooking (Red)	Rest (Green) Cooking (Red)
7-8pm	TV (Green)	Yoga (Green)	Internet shopping (Amber) Yoga (Green)	Rest (Green) Work from home (Amber)	Listening to music (Green)	Rest (Green) Washing up (Amber)	TV (Green) Washing up (Amber)
8-9pm	Call family (Amber)	Bath (Green)	TV (Green)	Bath (Green)	Call friend (Amber)	TV (Green)	Bath (Green)
9-10pm	Bed (Green)	Bed (Green)	Bed (Green)	Bed (Green)	Bed (Green)	Bed (Green)	Bed (Green)

Pacing: Once your routine is stabilised, try to build on your activities to slowly increase activity levels.

Monitor your fatigue and adapt accordingly, allowing your body time to respond to activity level increase.

Take your time with this and make sure the process is slow and steady.

How to conserve your energy

You may need to make small changes to your activities to help you maximise your energy levels throughout the day.

Here are some examples of an activity which can be modified to help conserve energy:

Getting ready:

- Sit when you need to.
- Support your elbows when a task takes longer than five minutes.
- Avoid aerosols and strong scents.
- Consider easy to manage hairstyles.

Dressing:

- Sit down when you need to.
- Complete lower body dressing first.
- Cross your legs or raise on a step stool to reduce bending.
- Choose front opening, loose-fitting clothes and safe slip-on shoes.
- Gather your clothes together before dressing.



Bathing/showering:

- Sit as much as possible when undressing/ bathing/drying.
- Make sure that you use stools/chairs that are designed to be used in bath/shower.
- Contact your occupational therapist or visit William Merritt for advice on suitable aids, equipment and adaptations.
- Use long-handled aids for your back and lower body.
- Use a towelling dressing gown instead of drying with a towel.



Cooking:

- Sit down when peeling and cutting vegetables. Consider buying prepared vegetables or prepare in advance.
- Plan for leftovers (freeze any leftovers which can be reheated later).
- Implement regular resting breaks throughout the cooking process. Make sure you rest before and after you start cooking.
- Push or slide heavy kitchen items across the kitchen surface instead of lifting them.
- Use smaller pans if possible so they are easier to lift.
- Only fill the kettle with as much water as you need and hold with both hands.



- Consider using an aid (such as a kitchen trolley or caddy if safe to do so) to reduce carrying and frequent trips.
- Consider having a bottle of water with you in easy reach to remain hydrated.

Housework:

- Spread tasks out throughout the week, i.e. Hoover one room a day. Consider bringing laundry downstairs each day to avoid carrying large loads.
- Sit down to complete the ironing and iron only what is necessary.
- Could someone else do the more heavy-duty housework tasks?
- Use long handled equipment where you can, i.e. use a mop to clean spillages instead of bending down to the floor and using kitchen towels.
- Allow dishes to air dry instead of drying them with a tea towel or use kitchen foil where possible to reduce the amount of washing up.
- Bend properly by bending your knees, do not hunch over.



Out and about – plan ahead:

- Try not to do too much in one day and know where you can rest.
- Use a trolley rather than a basket when shopping as you can rest on it. Shallow trolleys distribute weight more evenly making it easier to push, and you do not have to bend to reach items.

- Use mobility aids if needed. Consider hiring a wheelchair when out and about.
- Choose routes with minimal traffic and avoid peak hours to conserve energy.
- Break long journeys into shorter, manageable segments.
- Incorporate regular breaks into your itinerary to recharge.
- If possible, ask a partner or friend to drive.
- Find suitable parking for where you are going (close to destination). Consider applying for a disabled parking permit (blue badge) to access designated spaces.
- Use a reliable navigation system to reduce stress and ensure you stay on the correct route.

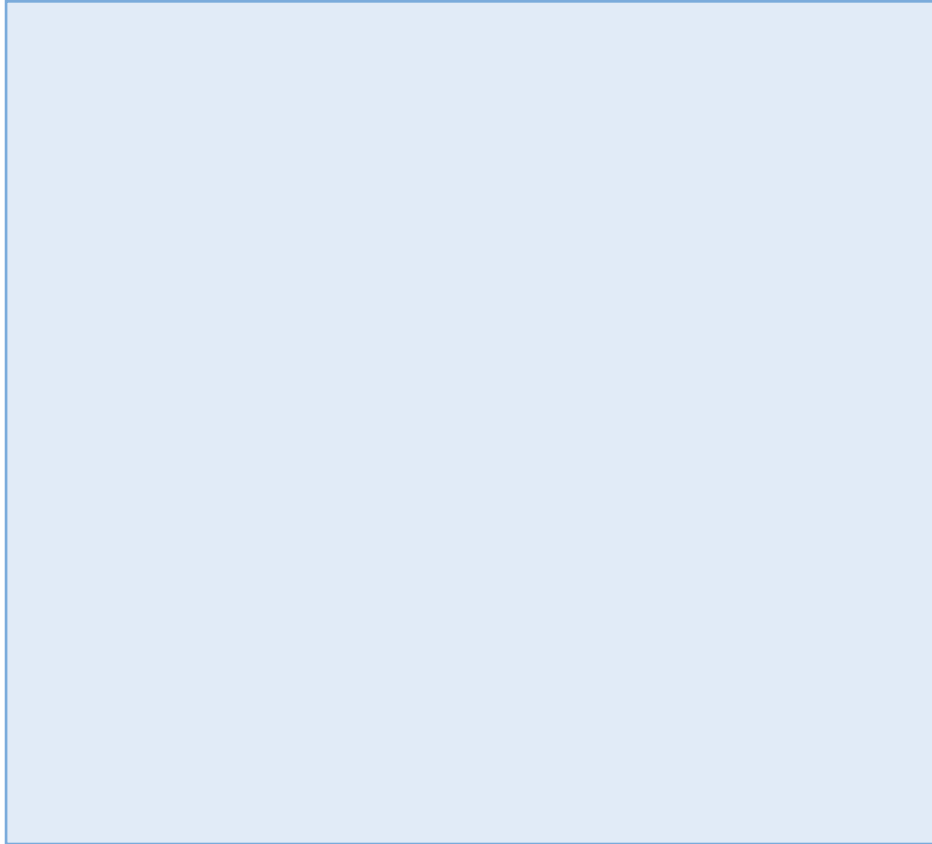


Work:

- Optimise work schedules with flexible breaks.
- Shorter shifts with regular breaks.
- Job sharing to distribute workload.
- Promote open communication about fatigue concerns within workplaces.



Think of an activity that you do frequently. Are there any ways you could break down the activity to help manage your fatigue?



Other ways of managing fatigue is to try to improve your sleep and focus on relaxation techniques.

Hopefully now you understand your fatigue a little better. We will now explore different ways you can help manage your fatigue.

Setting goals

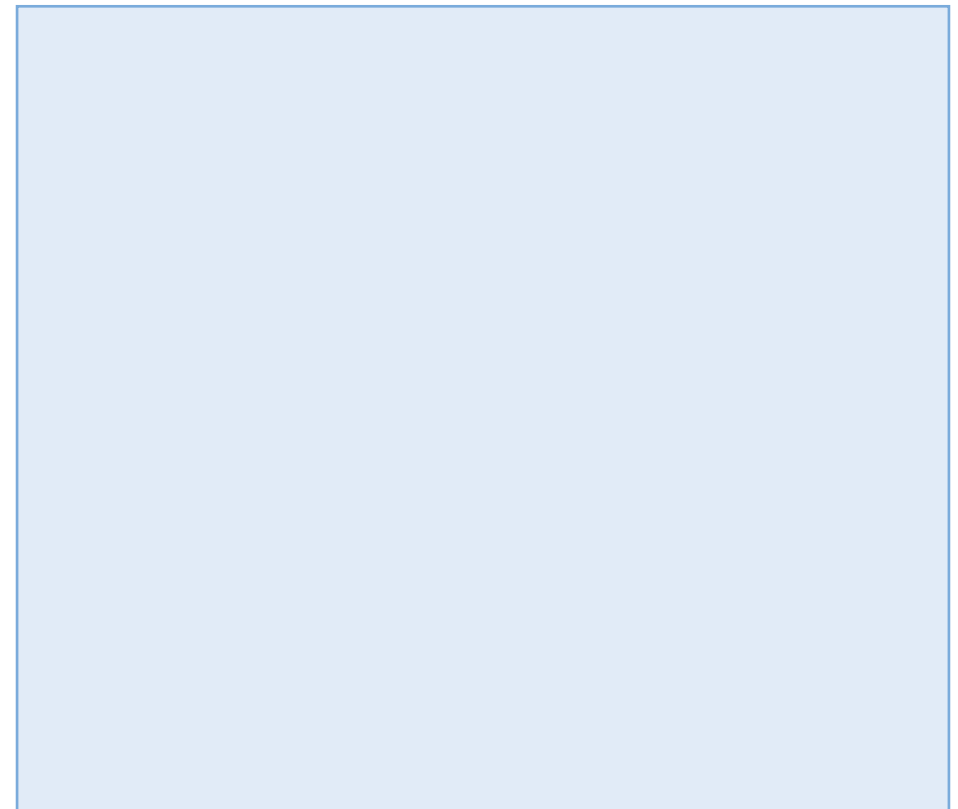
Some people find it useful to set goals to help them implement fatigue management strategies.

Setting goals allows us to make positive changes to our lifestyle and provides us with something to work towards.

Here is an example of a goal you could implement:

I am going to start doing 10 minutes of breathing exercises daily. I will be doing it daily in two weeks' time.

Use this space to write your own goals.



Spoon theory

The spoon theory is a creative way to explain to friends and family what it's like living with chronic illness. Often people can have limited energy, represented by spoons. Doing too much in one day can leave you short on spoons the next day.

If you only had 12 spoons per day, how would you use them?

Take away one spoon if you didn't sleep well last night, forgot to take your meds, or skipped a meal. Take away four spoons if you have a cold.

			
			
Get out of bed	Bathe	Make/eat a meal	Go to work/school
			
Get dressed	Style hair	Make plans/socialise	Go shopping
			
Take pills	Surf internet	Light housework	Go to GP
			
Watch TV	Read/study	Drive somewhere	Exercise

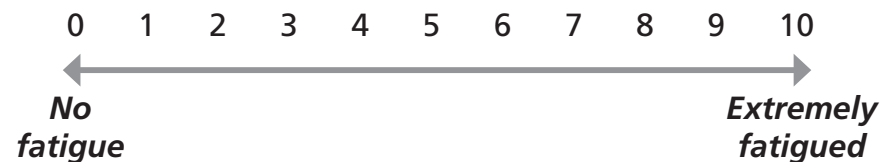
Ref: The Spoon Theory was written by Christine Miserando
www.butyoudontlooksick.com

Don't forget that if something brings you joy, or you have managed to recharge, it is possible to create spoons.

Fatigue diary

Recording your fatigue level after activity and rests

Scoring scale



Instructions

1. Start at the beginning of each day (6 – 8am).
2. Write down each activity (and any rests you have taken) into each two hour box.
3. Using the scoring scale above, score how you felt at the end of that two hour period.
4. Please record any other factors you feel are relevant e.g. stressful events, over exertion, skipping meals.

Your completed boxes should look something like this:

8-10am	Washed and dressed Breakfast Read paper	5
10-12pm	Drive to supermarket Shopping Drive Home	8

Date (from - to)	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday	
	6 - 8am							
8 - 10am								
10 - 12pm								
12 - 2pm								
2 - 4pm								
4 - 6pm								
6 - 8pm								
8 - 10pm								

Date (from - to)	Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
	6-8am					
8-10am						
10-12pm						
12-2pm						
2-4pm						
4-6pm						
6-8pm						
8-10pm						

Date (from - to)	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday	
	6 - 8am							
8 - 10am								
10 - 12pm								
12 - 2pm								
2 - 4pm								
4 - 6pm								
6 - 8pm								
8 - 10pm								

Date (from - to)	Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
	6-8am					
8-10am						
10-12pm						
12-2pm						
2-4pm						
4-6pm						
6-8pm						
8-10pm						

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(Urdu)

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(Punjabi) ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਵੱਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ, ਬ੍ਰੇਲ, ਆਡੀਓ ਜਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ 0113 843 3496 'ਤੇ ਕਾਲ ਕਰੋ