

DECODE YOUR FATIGUE



By Alex Howard

My aim in this book is to bring together the key principles of the approach I've developed alongside the Optimum Health Clinic (OHC) teams, to produce a practical guide that'll help you to help yourself. Although for many of you this won't necessarily replace the value of an online coaching program, or the need to work with a practitioner, there is a great deal you can do for yourself at home. Indeed, I'm deeply touched by the many comments I receive via email and social media from people who've been able to impact their healing journey dramatically by putting into action the tools you're about to learn, simply by following them online.

In setting the tone of this book, I intend to tread a number of delicate lines:

- I want to give you hope, without having you fall victim to the endless disappointment that I experienced.
- I aim to stay true to the scientific complexity of this group of conditions, while also making practical tools accessible to you.
- I want to offer you compassion and empathy, while also being bold enough to give you a kick in the ass if and when you need it.

I'm sure that at times I'll fail in all of these intentions; however, I hope that by sharing them with you here, you'll at least know they're good! Furthermore, although this book is aimed at readers who are on a healing path from fatigue, I'm also aware that there are a number of medical experts who follow my work, and so, where appropriate, I've provided details of primary sources to assist those who wish to go deeper into the research that underpins our approach.

You may be reading this book as neither a sufferer nor a medical expert but as a caregiver or a relative of someone who's going through this immensely difficult experience, and so I've also included additional resources to support you.

The 12-Step Plan

At the heart of this book are 12 steps, or lessons, that'll not only help you to decode your fatigue but also to start to create your path to recovery and learn how best to navigate it. These are the same 12 steps that I look at with all of my patients at the OHC – and they form the core of our approach.

And guess what? We're already at the first of the 12 steps! Here's the thing: I know you didn't choose to have fatigue. What's more, you don't deserve it (no

one does!) and you don't want it. And yet, whether you like it or not, right now it's happening and together we need to deal with it.

As my uncle helped me to realize, if you want the circumstances of your life to change, you have to be the one to change them. Indeed, that's our first step:

STEP 1 Take responsibility

What I call radical responsibility means taking charge of our own life, on every level we can. Now, there is a very important distinction between blame and responsibility. You're not to blame for the situation in which you find yourself – you didn't do this deliberately – but if you don't take responsibility for changing it, the chances are that no one else will.

Right now, I challenge you to make a commitment to yourself: whatever it takes, at least finish this book. If you're struggling with motivation right now, I think you'll find that'll change if you stay with me in the coming pages. If you have the motivation but don't know where to start, that'll also, I hope, start to change.

In Part I, we're going to take the time to really understand what fatigue is, what causes it, and why conventional medicine has failed to truly understand it. In Part II, we're going to take the time to decode your

fatigue together, and then in Part III we'll create a plan for your recovery.

You might feel tempted to jump straight to Parts II or III; however, because this book's content has been very carefully structured and it follows a particular sequence, I'd ask you to please read it in the order I've presented it. Also, just so you know, there are a few instances when I get a little technical; however, as this information isn't essential to your journey I've put it in boxes and you can skip it if you wish.

Finally, I've created a free online Decode Your Fatigue companion course to be used alongside this book. It includes video interviews with many of the people whose case studies you'll read in the coming chapters, along with quizzes and questionnaires to help bring further clarity, and even some recipe plans to help with my recommended dietary changes. You can access the course at www.alexhoward.com/fatigue.

Before we go any further, I think it's important to define what we actually mean when we refer to fatigue and fatigue-related conditions, and to explore why conventional medicine has likely failed you. So buckle up, and let's get stuck into the rather painful history of this complex but fascinating group of conditions.

Defining Fatigue

In that spirit, before we go any further, we need to define exactly what we're talking about when we speak of fatigue. In the dictionary, fatigue is defined as 'extreme tiredness resulting from mental or physical exertion or illness.' However, I'm not sure how helpful this is.

If your levels of mental or physical exertion are excessive, then your fatigue doesn't require decoding and your remedy is simple: live a more balanced life. What's more likely is that your levels of exertion are normal and yet you still experience fatigue. This leaves us with the real question – why does a normal level of activity leave you fatigued?

Perhaps you've just recently started to find that the day is longer than the energy you have to meet it, and that your afternoon energy dip is no longer defeated by a strong espresso. Perhaps you've suffered with severe fatigue for many years, or maybe you've oscillated between phases of normal functioning and phases of fatigue but have never felt that your energy is reliable in the way it should be.

Regardless, the reason you're reading this book is that something remains unexplained. You aren't just a mystery to modern medicine – you're a mystery to yourself. And it's my hope that by the time you reach the end of this book, that mystery will be solved, at least in part.

Diagnosing Fatigue

This brings us to the second step in our 12-step plan:



Get an accurate diagnosis

You see, a diagnosis of fatigue is no diagnosis at all: fatigue is a symptom, not a condition in itself. The reason we need to decode your fatigue is that fatigue, whether it's self-diagnosed or medically diagnosed, is ultimately a false diagnosis. To really understand this point, we need to explore the diagnostic process for fatigue-related conditions.

A diagnosis of fatigue isn't a diagnosis of the presence of a particular physical injury, a particular pathogen, or even a specific marker or set of markers that are out of balance. A diagnosis of fatigue, be it chronic or otherwise, is a diagnosis of exclusion. That means it's a diagnosis in the absence of any known cause.

If you're suffering with fatigue, chronic or otherwise, it's of critical importance that you engage with a suitably qualified medical professional to thoroughly investigate the conventional medical approach. There are multiple causes of fatigue that are identifiable by orthodox

medicine, and if any of these is the culprit, acting sooner rather than later could literally be the difference between life and death.

So please, before you go any further, make sure you've been fully assessed by a suitably qualified medical doctor and that you've gone through the steps above; or at the very least, do it in parallel (unless your doctor is willing to follow a number of lines of investigation at the same time, this process can take many months.) Don't take this warning lightly, and don't delay or put off seeing a doctor.

Before we get into the specifics of the recovery map, I think it's important to ensure that you've established the right mindset for rolling it out. My deep hope is that this book is playing a critical role in empowering you to decode your fatigue and to move forward on your healing journey.

For this to be effective, you must become a champion of your own success. That means you need to be able to motivate yourself on your low days, taper your enthusiasm on your good days – so you don't go too fast (which will likely result in an energy crash) – and ultimately, be the one who's there for you when perhaps no one else is. In essence, you need to take on the role of your biggest champion and become your own inner coach.

It might be a very hard thing to hear, but perhaps this is all happening to you for a reason. That reason might not become clear right away; however, I know from experience that if nothing else, looking for the positives is a more empowering choice to make.

Ultimately, your healing journey isn't only a physical and emotional one – it's also a journey for your soul. Trust the process, listen to your body, and you might be amazed at where it takes you.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Living with fatigue can feel hopeless and confusing, with traditional medical approaches focusing on managing symptoms rather than understanding and addressing underlying causes. But healing is possible when you learn to decode your fatigue and apply the right interventions, in the right sequence, at the right time.

After suffering from chronic fatigue for seven years, renowned health expert Alex Howard founded one of the world's leading clinics specializing in fatigue, and has dedicated over 20 years to understanding this condition.

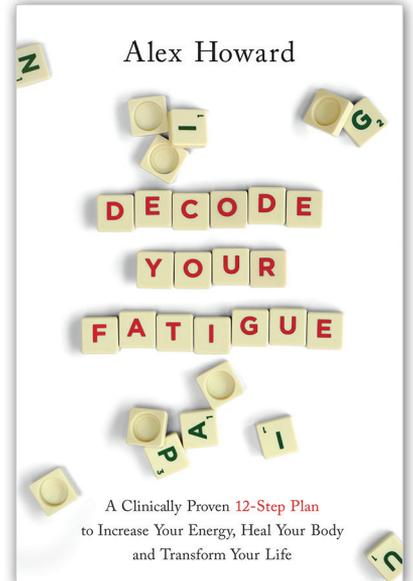
This book will guide you through a clinically proven methodology to help you to:

- Understand the underlying factors that cause fatigue
- Discover the key steps to increasing your energy sustainably
- Map out your personalized plan for recovery

This revolutionary 12-step approach will not only help you to decode your fatigue, but also start to create your own path to healing and transformation.

The 12-Steps include:

1. Take responsibility
2. Get an accurate diagnosis
3. Understand the role of your mitochondria
4. Understand your personality
5. Create an environment for healing
6. Get in a healing state
7. Optimize your digestion
8. Balance your hormones
9. Support your immune system
10. Discover your baseline and learn to pace
11. Optimize your food
12. Manage your team



Decode Your Fatigue
 By Alex Howard
 Publisher: Hay House
 \$17.99, ISBN: 9781401961107



ABOUT THIS AUTHOR

Alex Howard is the Founder and Chairman of The Optimum Health Clinic (OHC), one of the world's leading integrative medicine clinics specializing in fatigue. With a team of 20 full-time practitioners supporting thousands of patients in 50+ countries, the OHC team have pioneered working with patients remotely since 2005.

Along with founding and leading the OHC practitioner teams for the past 17 years, Alex is an immensely experienced psychology practitioner, having delivered over 10,000 consultations. He has also led the Therapeutic Coaching practitioner programme since 2005, training the next generation of psychology practitioners. Since March 2020, Alex has been documenting his therapeutic work with real-life patients via his *In Therapy with Alex Howard* YouTube series.

In 2015, Alex founded the leading online video platform Conscious Life, which has produced programs with over 150 teachers, including Byron Katie,

Marianne Williamson, Dr. Joe Dispenza, and Ken Wilber. In the last few years, Alex has created some of the largest online conferences in the health and mind-body markets, including the Fatigue Super Conference and the Trauma and Mind-Body Super Conference. Alex's online conferences have been attended by over a quarter of a million people.