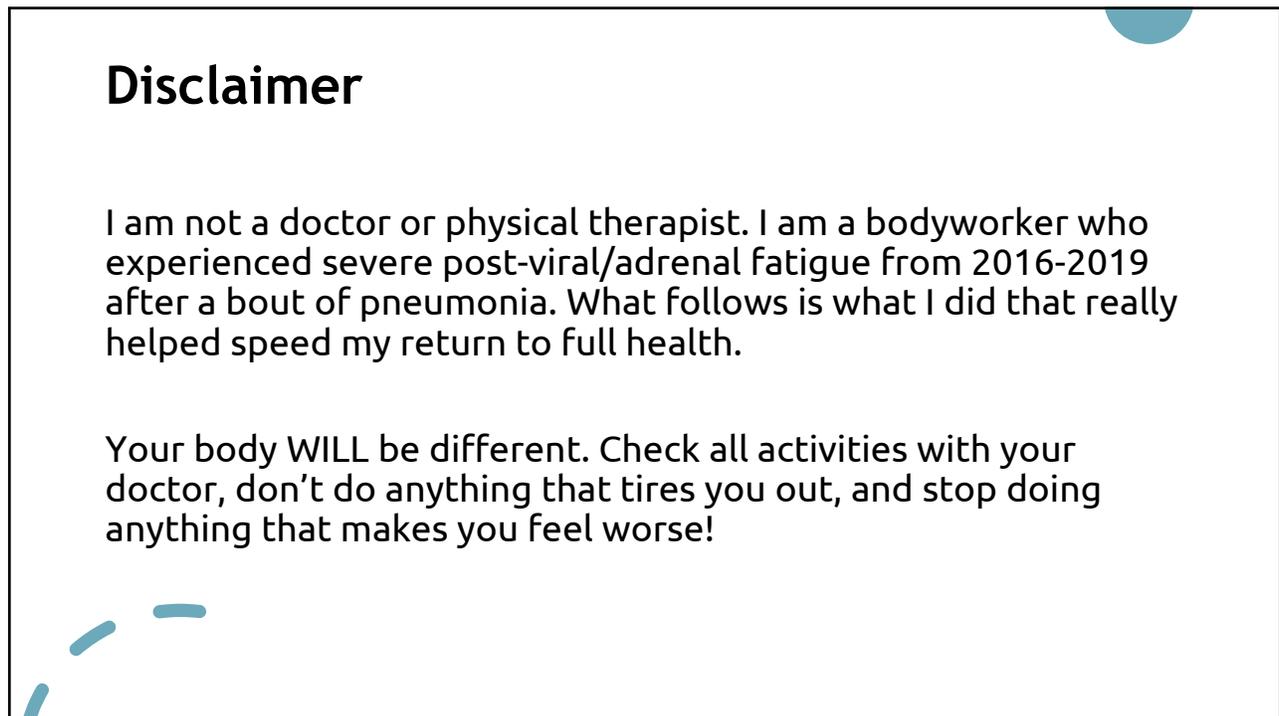




1



## Disclaimer

I am not a doctor or physical therapist. I am a bodyworker who experienced severe post-viral/adrenal fatigue from 2016-2019 after a bout of pneumonia. What follows is what I did that really helped speed my return to full health.

Your body WILL be different. Check all activities with your doctor, don't do anything that tires you out, and stop doing anything that makes you feel worse!

2

## Why Track Activity?

When I was recovering from a tough illness and chronic stress, it was easy to overdo it. I would feel fine as I exercised, and then “crash” the next day. **This burnout cycle kept me feeling run-down longer.**

Tracking activity helped me find my unique sweet spot for “just enough” activity to help rebuild strength without overdoing it. This concept is known as **Active Recovery**.



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## About Active Recovery

Active Recovery is the idea that athletes recover faster when they do some very light exercise, rather than taking total rest. The resources on the web were intended mostly for athletes, and assumed your body was in peak condition.

In adapting Active Recovery for illness recovery, I found that I recovered fastest if I kept my activity under 70% of my maximum level as much as possible, and my “workouts” were at 50-60% of my maximum. Conveniently, this corresponds to Zones 1 & 2 in the wearable Polar activity tracker.

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## Connections with ME/CFS

Myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME), which is sometimes conflated with chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) bears a lot of resemblance to adrenal fatigue, especially in terms of exercise intolerance. It's also being studied to shed insight on "long Covid," because ME may possibly also be a post-viral syndrome.

Since I was diagnosed with adrenal fatigue after a tough viral illness, it seemed worth keeping ME lessons in mind.

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## What I Did

1. Figured out how much activity was "too much."
2. Kept my activity within those bounds for several weeks.
3. Started adding in exercise at the Zone 1-2 level twice a week.
4. Over the course of about 18 months, observed that my exercise tolerance gradually increased back to normal levels.
5. I did NOT pre-determine a schedule on which I would increase my activity. This "graduated exercise" regimen has been proven to exacerbate chronic fatigue syndrome/ME and I wanted to be sure to avoid that pitfall.

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## What Tools Did I Use?

A notebook, replicated in this deck

A Polar wrist-based activity tracker (A370 – can find used; the Ignite is a good choice for a new tracker)

The Polar Flow app to synch with the wearable



- [Polar Ignite 2 Manual](#)



- [Polar A360 Manual](#)
- [Polar A370 Manual](#)

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## Try It Yourself

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# Heart Rate Table

These are the heart rate "zones" I'll be referring to throughout this document.

	Zone 1 50-60% max	Zone 2 60-70% max	Zone 3 70-80% max	Zone 4 80-90% max	Zone 5 90-100% max
Age					
20	100-119	120-149	140-159	160-179	180-200
30	95-102	103-132	133-151	152-170	171-190
40	89-106	107-124	125-143	144-161	162-180
50	85-101	102-118	119-135	136-152	153-170
60	80-95	96-111	112-127	128-143	144-160
70	75-89	90-104	105-119	120-134	135-150
80	76-87	88-99	100-111	112-125	126-140

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## Step 1: Observe

Determine how various activities make you feel. Track your actions for a few days and note how you felt when you finished, and the next day.

Activity	Duration	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4+	How I felt after	How I felt next day
e.g. Yoga	20 mins	35%	50%	15%	0%	Good	Tired

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## Step 2: Calibrate

How much Zone 1 activity left you feeling good?	
How much Zone 2 activity left you feeling good?	
How much Zone 3 activity left you feeling good?	
How much Zone 4+ activity left you feeling good?	

Now that you know how some activities make you feel, you should be able to determine what activities felt good **without leaving you more tired the next day.**

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## Step 3: Set Your Target Workout

Overall, how much activity, in what zone, could you do without tiring?

My Target Workout	
Maximum Zone	
Maximum Duration	

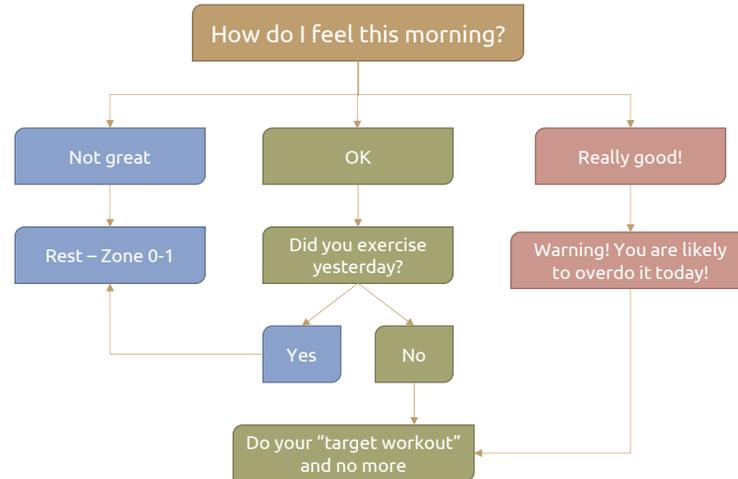
Note: This number might be much smaller than you expect. It is critical that you **don't overestimate your abilities**. If you are unsure of how to set your target, **try starting with 10-15 minutes of Zone 2 activity.**



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## Step 4: Try Some Activities

Keeping your goals in mind, try using your Polar to regulate how much you do in a day.



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## Knowing When to Increase Exercise



**DO NOT** try to follow a predetermined **progression plan**. Don't plan "I'll do 15 minutes a day this week, and 30 minutes a day next week." That kind of forced progression [can lead to frustrating or dangerous relapses](#).



Only add more exercise when you can do your target workout 3x/week AND not feel tired...and can repeat this for several weeks in a row.

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## Bonus Metric: Daily Activity Total

Your Polar will track your total daily activity. While you are recovering, **you should not be aiming for 100%** of the suggested daily goal.

Start with 50% on rest days and up to 75% on exercise days and adjust as needed. Keeping your total activity **below** the threshold that tires you is key to your recovery!

