

Patty's PT Tips

Patty's PT Tips

February 2, 2022

Coping with Exacerbations and Modifying Your Activities

- I. Assessing pseudo exacerbation vs acute exacerbation-Considerations
 - a. Is this a new symptom?
 - b. Is it a subtle or significant change?
 - c. Is it transitory or sustained?
 - d. Have you recently increased your "threat bucket" load prior to the appearance of the new symptom?
 - e. Is it muscle weakness, sensory change, balance, vision, coordination, emotional lability, or depression?
- II. What is your response?
 - a. Is it time to alert your neurologist or general practitioner? A new symptom may or may not be MS related.
 - b. Are you willing to ask for help?
 - c. Did you return to your baseline function in 24 hours or less?
 - d. What help have you asked for from a significant other to help manage the change?
 - e. Have significant others noticed a change in your recent function, movement, behaviors? ...and are you willing to listen to their feedback?
 - f. Can you modify/reduce symptoms by changing your behaviors with rest/sleep, mindfulness practices, stretching, or by changes to your surrounding climate i.e. get into an air conditioned space. Does it provide sustained reduction in symptoms?

- g. Are you willing to discuss a change in medication regimen with your neurologist?
- h. Does modifying the emotional triggers around you help reduce symptoms? This may be family, social or work relationships or schedule changes and demands.
- i. Would working with a mental health professional help you modify the circumstances that contribute to your “threat bucket”?
- j. What stressors can you let go of to enhance your capacity to heal or modify the symptoms you are experiencing? (This includes new and old symptoms)