



The Heat is On!



Dealing With Summer and the MS Pseudo-exacerbations That Come With It.

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Have you ever done the Ring Test? Over the summer months, our rings will fit snugger on our fingers, making them harder to remove. But in the wintertime, those same rings will feel like they're about to slide right off. This is caused by the natural inflammation that takes place in our body tissues as temperatures rise.

But for people with MS, this normal inflammation sits on top of the inflammation already occurring as a result of the disease. This puts tremendous stress on joints and nerves, making existing symptoms worse and often causing new symptoms to develop. The condition is called Uhthoff's Phenomenon, and it affects 60-80% of all MS sufferers when they're subjected to heat, humidity or strenuous exercise.

"The good news is, these pseudo-exacerbations are only temporary," said Nikki Pfeiffer, Executive Director of The Multiple Sclerosis Alliance of Southern Colorado. "They're not actual relapses. The bad news is, summer comes every year. Planning ahead is important in order to cool ourselves off before symptoms begin developing."

Planning ahead can be as simple as exercising in the early mornings or late evenings when the day has cooled off. "That includes housework," notes Nikki. "Meal preparation, laundry, and everyday housecleaning chores can be all it takes to overheat

Up to 80% of MS patients report experiencing Uhthoff's Phenomenon in the summertime.

Uhthoff's Phenomenon is an MS-related heat sensitivity condition. A rise in core body temperature by as little as 1/2 degree celsius can trigger temporary worsening of MS symptoms. These heat-related symptoms may include:

- Numbness
- Fatigue
- Blurred Vision
- Tremors
- Weakness
- Cognitive Issues

In this report we look at ways to fight back.

ourselves. This is especially true for anyone living without air conditioning in their homes. “Fortunately here in Colorado, temperatures can drop 20-to-30 degrees as soon as the sun sets,” said Nikki. “That makes a huge difference.”

Roger Williams, owner of the CPA firm Oaktree Business Services, and the MSA’s Secretary/Treasurer noted, “People who need an air conditioner in their homes to help manage their MS symptoms may have the cost of this equipment deducted from their taxes. They only need their physician to write

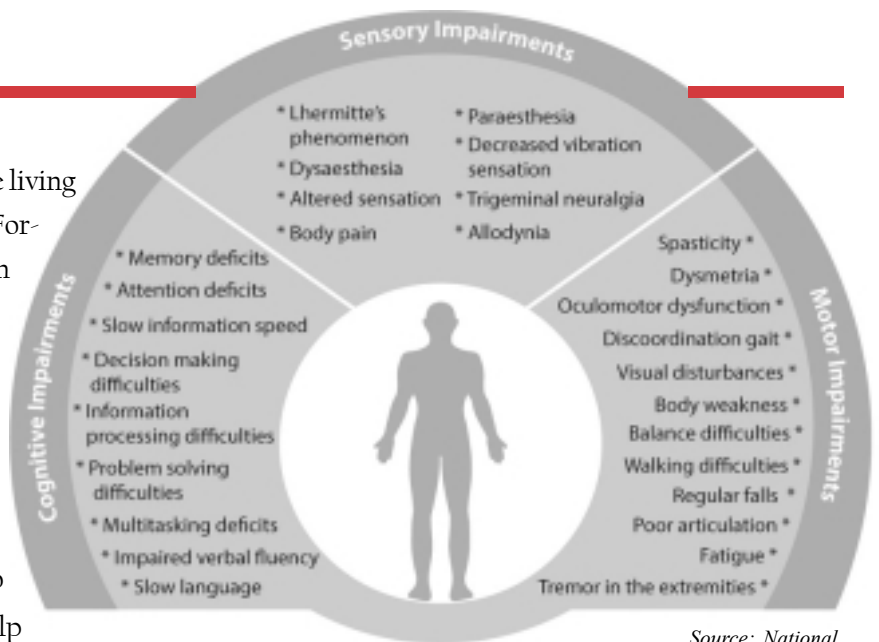
a prescription for it.” Most physicians are happy to do this, so don’t be afraid to ask. You might also ask your doctor to prescribe cooling attire, such as cooling vests, scarves, head bands and wrist-wraps so your insurance will cover

their cost. Be aware that not all policies will cover cooling attire, but many do so it’s worth it to find out if yours is one of them. In the meantime, keeping a fan nearby along with a squirt bottle to mist yourself with

water frequently is a wonderful cooling technique in Colorado. Our arid climate is the secret to making the misting bottle trick so successful.

You won’t believe how great it feels until you’ve tried it!

You can also keep your core body heat down by staying hydrated with ice-cold drinks, and eating cool foods, like yogurt, fruit and popsicles. If you’re still experiencing pseudo-exacerbation, try climbing into a cool bath or taking a



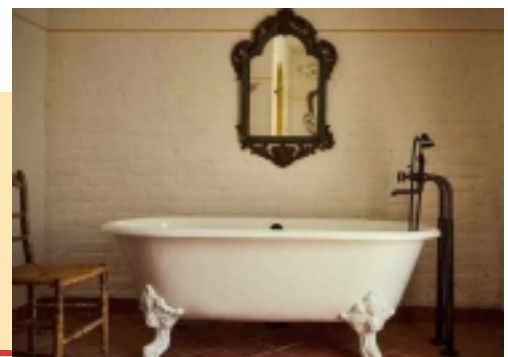
Symptoms in multiple sclerosis

Source: National Institutes of Health



Some foods will not only cool you off, but can help reduce inflammation! What a bonus! These wonderful foods include tomatoes, tuna, yogurt, leafy greens, pineapple, garlic, fresh basil, raisins, apples and broccoli.

Weird MS History: Back before more sophisticated screening tests were developed, the Hot Bath Test was the surest way to diagnose MS. The patient was immersed in a tub of hot water and monitored to see if neurologic symptoms either appeared or worsened.




cool shower.

“Swimming is a fantastic exercise that a lot of our clients enjoy,” said Nikki. Look for a facility that keeps their pools at or below 86 degrees. The colder the better. And of course, avoid the Jacuzzi as well as the temptation of a hot shower afterwards.

“Another great trick is to leave plastic bottles of water in your freezer,” Nikki advised. “Take one out and place it on your night stand before going to sleep. This way you can drink cold water first thing in the morning without having to get out of bed.”

Bottom Line: Stop Dreading Summer!

If you’ve been dreading the August page on your wall calendar each year, know that you’re not alone, but that it’s also not necessary. We can still enjoy summer the way we did when we were children. With a little advanced planning and clever shopping, we can beat the heat and stay comfortable through to September.

Let us know what you think and share your own ideas with us on our Facebook page at [Facebook.com/MSAsoco](https://www.facebook.com/MSAsoco). 

References: National Institutes of Health, Multiple Sclerosis News Today, Multiple Sclerosis Association of America, the Mayo Clinic, and the National MS Society.



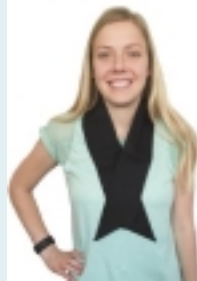
Curious About Cooling Attire?

Polar has assembled some of the most ingenious cooling products ever to appear side-by-side in a single catalog. From cooling wrist and foot wraps, to cooling hats, vests, pillow cases and even bra inserts! You never knew there were so many discreet and downright fashionable ways to cool off in public. They also dedicate a section of their website to the heat concerns of MS sufferers!

We were thrilled and proud when Polar came on as sponsor for the MSA. Check out their website at polarproducts.com and see what Polar has to offer!



Cooling Torso-wraps



Cooling Neck



Cooling Vests



Cooling Bra Inserts

Cooling Wrist-wraps



Cooling Hats



Cooling Ankle-wraps



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Cooling Attire Sets



Neck & Upper Spine Wrap



Cooling Pillowcase