

REDS: Basics of Coherent Energy Under Pressure.

Relationships | Exercise | Diet | Sleep – when pushing no longer works.

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When pushing harder stops working, try adaptation.

Anxiety, burnout, and chronic fatigue are increasingly common in high pressure contexts. Pushing harder, overriding fatigue, and relying on adrenaline — these are *override strategies* that ignore what your body is telling you. It can lead to feeling ‘tired but wired’ - a constant restlessness that starts to affect your mental health and relationships, as well as your ability to work and lead.

Shifting from reactive recovery to proactive protection:

The alternative to pushing is adaptation through load design: you’re not waiting for a stressful event to happen and reacting, you’re anticipating and adjusting to reduce the shock in advance. This is the principle of **allostasis** i.e. adaptation in a constantly changing world.

The key principles of this approach and creating energy coherence are:

- 1) **reducing** stress load creatively;
- 2) **pacing** energy use to allow steadier cycles of expenditure and recovery; and
- 3) **maintaining** reserves at all times by staying within your ‘energy envelope’ including by taking breaks throughout the day.

The interventions below are based on personal insights and scientific research on Long Covid, stress physiology, and chronic fatigue management. The body can recover from deep depletion. Below are four domains to begin.

Allostasis: coherence in all conditions.

R Relationships

The relational field can be a source of load or restoration. Most high achievers and leaders have optimised for productivity, not for the quality of their support or relational ecosystem.

Audit your ecosystem. Reduce time in relationships that consistently strain and deplete. Actively increase contact with those that relax and restore. Hold any guilt of letting go of a relationship with tender equanimity.

Set temporal boundaries. Know how many conversations you can hold in a day and week. Have clear beginnings and endings. Protect recovery time between. Use your calendar to assist you.

Ask for what you need. Space, reflection, appreciation, feedback. Being invincible is not a requirement for success. Asking and receiving are essential for healthy relating.

Know your limits by topic and timing. Some conversations belong to certain times of day. Not all challenges, feedback, or emotional loads need to be received at all times.

Your notes:

E Exercise

High-intensity training can be too costly for depleted systems because energy and body recovery are often compromised. Shift from performance to recalibration.

Experiment with prioritising strength and flexibility. Exercise doesn't always mean pushing the cardiovascular system. Low-intensity resistance training and stretching can build a strong body without placing undue load on your system.

Keep cardiovascular load matched to recovery. Walking, swimming, cycling at a pace that allows conversation (*Zone 2 training*) and doesn't trigger exhaustion over the following days. If it pushes into breathlessness, agitation, or a crash at any point, adjust.

Include somatic or kinesthetic work. Feldenkrais, Tai Chi, or any practice that reconnects awareness to physical sensation like position, pressure, tension, ease. This supports nervous system recalibration and refined energy awareness.

Your notes:

D Diet

The basics matter. Crashes and spikes in blood sugar, along with insufficient intake of essential nutrients, generate low-level physiological stress. It adds to cognitive and emotional load both acutely and over time.

Track nourishment, not craving. Eating that is pleasurable, satisfying, and sustaining helps reduce craving cycles. Bringing awareness to what you eat can make eating a practice in contentment rather than a distraction or task.

Eat at regular times. Morning, midday, evening, with optional snacks. This pattern works for most systems. Regular meals can reduce decision load and signal safety and abundance to the nervous system.

Balance protein, carbohydrate, and fibre at each meal. Lean protein increases satiety and supports stable energy, especially important if you're exercising or in mid-life.

Minimise substances that cloud cognition. Alcohol and excess caffeine can worsen sleep and daytime functioning.

Your notes:

S Sleep

Sleep is a major time of recovery when the nervous system consolidates, clears, and recalibrates. Treating yourself the way a good parent would treat a child — with consistency and care at the boundaries of sleep — is not indulgence, it's critical infrastructure.

Keep regular sleep and wake times. Consistency strongly supports circadian rhythm. Fix the wake time — sleep follows. If you wake at 3am, allow it; rest the body and settle the mind on the breath or feet. If needed, get up and read something boring until sleep returns.

Create an evening wind-down. Reduce load progressively in the two hours before bed. Dim light, reduce stimulation, process the day briefly rather than carrying it onto the pillow. Eye masks, earplugs, layering — whatever reduces sensory load to rest.

Morning light before screens. Natural light in the first hour recalibrates the circadian (sleep) clock and supports mood stability throughout the day and over time.

Reconnect steadily on waking. Brief reading, nature sounds, music, gentle movement allows recalibration before reactive tasks. The morning window often sets the system's tone for the day. Set your intentions for the day the night before,

Your notes:

Tech tool: A body battery monitor (which measures heart rate variability) helps track sleep recovery, energy drain, and pacing effectiveness. Measures of stress levels and heart rate also help with energy awareness and planning. Included with most smart watches.

Reflection: What was most useful to you?

If this resonates and you're noticing similar patterns in your work or life, I'd be interested in what you're experimenting with and what's shifting.

You can contact me on amina@doctoramina.com or via doctoramina.com/contact.

May you be free,
Amina

Disclaimer: This guide is for general information and reflects my personal experience. It isn't medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment, and it's not a substitute for professional care.