

## Management of Fatigue

Post-polio fatigue can be managed with the use of:

- Education regarding energy conservation techniques and lifestyle changes;
- Weight loss;
- Prescription of orthoses and assistive devices;
- Aerobic exercise; and
- Pharmacological treatment.

The most important aspect of the treatment of fatigue is educating the patient regarding energy conservation techniques. Teaching the patient the concepts of pacing activities, rest and work simplification can assist the patient in conserving their cardiopulmonary endurance and reduce the symptoms of fatigue (refer to following section on lifestyle modification). If the patient fails to adopt these basic management principles other measures, e.g. aerobic exercise, will be of little benefit.

Although some patients may be deconditioned, the presence of unrelenting fatigue may preclude the prescription of a modified aerobic training program (refer to following section on the role of exercise). In this case, the prescription of rest may have greater justification. If fatigue cannot be managed through activity reduction and rest, significant lifestyle changes may be required, e.g. changes to the work situation and home management responsibilities.

## *THE LATE EFFECTS OF POLIO*

Muscle fatigue, associated with overwork of specific muscle groups, often responds well to localised rest and the use of orthoses to provide protection to the involved muscles and joints. As a result, the prescription or modification of orthoses and walking aids may be required (refer to following section on orthotics and mobility aids). Recent changes to the construction of orthoses have replaced heavier materials that were formerly used in fabrication of braces with more lightweight materials. These lighter materials significantly reduce the workload required of the individual.

Medications that have been trialed for the management of fatigue in the post-polio population include pyridostigmine, amitriptyline, selegiline and bromocriptine. (For further information regarding these trials, refer to the following section on pharmacological therapies)