Chronic Condition: Finding Your Strength

The power of inner strength
Having a chronic condition can be stressful. And stress can make you feel anxious and out of control. That might mean you don't make the best decisions or take the best care of yourself.

But you have the power to deal with stress. It comes from tapping into your inner strength.

Inner strength helps you bounce back from stressful situations. When you're strong inside, you recover more quickly from setbacks or difficult changes. And you may find it a little easier to handle the daily challenges of living with a chronic health problem.

You may not feel strong all the time. That's understandable. Many people feel drained by the demands of their condition.

That's why it's important to look for things that help you feel stronger:

Those sources of power vary from person to person.

You probably know someone who gets knocked down but doesn't stay down—who always manages to turn life's lemons into lemonade.

Where do you think that person finds strength? What can you learn from how that person handles hardship?

Some people draw strength from focusing on their values or beliefs. Some find it through prayer or meditation.

Others gain strength from serving others or from being outdoors. It can also come from being around people who care about you and support you.

Finding and tapping into your personal sources can fuel the inner strength you need to cope with your health problem.

How others find their strength
Here are some ways that other people recharge their inner strength.

"When I feel stressed, I go to the park near my house. Sometimes I walk and listen to the birds. Sometimes I sit on a bench and look up into the trees. Being there reminds me that I am a small part of a big, beautiful world.

When I go home, I feel more peaceful and more able to deal with the challenges of my disease." —Chita
"I'm pretty tough, but there are times when we all need a little help. I'm lucky to have the guys in my coffee group. We get together every morning and talk about our lives. I tell them things I don't even tell my wife. Knowing I have their support gives me courage on the really rough days."
—Keith

"Nothing is more important to me than my family. Some days I'd like to stay in bed with the covers over my head. But I don't want my kids to worry about me.
Knowing they need me gives me purpose and keeps me going, even on the worst days."
—Pamela

Connecting to your power source
You've overcome challenges in the past. Each time you face a tough situation, you learn a little more about yourself and where your strength comes from.

What fuels your inner strength? If you're not sure, it may help to think back to a stressful time in the past. What worked for you then might work for you now.

Finding my strength

What helped me get through a hard time in the past?

What is something that could help me feel stronger now?