

Navigating PMR:

Lifestyle Changes

Learn practical adjustments—like diet, movement, and sleep—that can help reduce symptoms and support overall well-being.



This guide is for general information only and does not replace advice from your doctor or care team. Always talk with your healthcare provider before making changes to your exercise, diet, or treatment plan.



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Essential Guide for Everyday Management

How Are You Doing Right Now?

Before changing your treatment or lifestyle, check in with yourself. Everyone's PMR experience varies, and what works for one may not be needed for another.

Ask yourself:

- Are you taking your medication as prescribed?
- Are your symptoms well-controlled, or are pain, stiffness, or fatigue still affecting you?
- Do you have the energy to do the things that matter to you?
- Are daily activities manageable, or do symptoms limit you?

If you're taking medication regularly and feeling good, you may not need to make changes right now. If symptoms continue, small lifestyle adjustments in nutrition, activity, rest, and stress management can support your treatment.

The goal isn't perfection — it's finding what helps you feel your best! Even small steps, like a short walk, anti-inflammatory foods, or better sleep, can reduce pain and stiffness, improve energy, and help manage medication side effects. Tiny steps forward can lead to feeling better over time.

Steps to Feel Your Best

Daily choices can support your health and help you stay active.

Eating for Health

Foods that fight inflammation may ease PMR symptoms.

- Colorful fruits and vegetables (berries, leafy greens, tomatoes)
- Fish like salmon, sardines, or mackerel (2-3 times per week)
- Nuts, seeds, and olive oil
- Whole grains like oatmeal and brown rice



Watch out for:

- Long-term steroid use can affect your bones and blood sugar.
- Getting enough calcium and vitamin D is important.
- Limit added sugars and processed foods.

Talk with your doctor about:

- If you need calcium or vitamin D supplements
- Benefits of seeing a registered dietitian
- Managing weight changes from steroids





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Staying Active

Gentle movement keeps joints flexible and muscles strong.

Try low-impact activities walking, swimming, water aerobics, tai chi, or yoga.

Start small. Even 10 minutes a day counts. Build up gradually as you feel able.

Listen to your body. Mild stiffness is normal; sharp pain means stop.



Try a short morning walk after your muscles have warmed up, rather than first thing when stiffness is worst.

Talk with your doctor about:

- How to exercise safely when you are experiencing pain and fatigue
- Whether physical therapy could help
- Warning signs that you're overdoing it

Getting Quality Rest

PMR fatigue is real, and your body needs time to heal.

- Aim for 7-9 hours of sleep each night
- Keep a regular sleep schedule, even on weekends
- Create a calm bedtime routine (dim lights, limit screens, try gentle stretching)
- Take short rest breaks during the day if needed

Talk with your doctor if:

- You can't sleep due to pain or stiffness
- You feel exhausted despite sleeping enough
- Steroids are affecting your sleep

Consider Other Therapies That May Help

Hot and cold therapy



Acupuncture



Massage or physical therapy



Mind-body practices



Note: Talk to your doctor before starting or changing complementary treatment.



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Supporting Your Mental Health

Living with a chronic condition can bring stress, frustration, or sadness. These feelings are common.

What helps:

- Stay connected. Spend time with people who lift your spirits.
- Continue hobbies and enjoyable activities
- Consider support groups or counseling to provide tools for coping with chronic illness.

Talk with your doctor if:

- You feel down or anxious most days
- You've lost interest in things you used to enjoy
- Stress is making your symptoms worse



Talking with Friends and Family

Loved ones often want to help but may not understand PMR.

Tips for Conversations

Instead of *"I don't feel well."* ➔ **Try** *"My shoulders are really stiff today, so I need to move slowly."*

Instead of *"I hurt."* ➔ **Try** *"Some days it hurts just to lift my arms to brush my hair or get something from a cabinet."*

Ask for what you need. *"Could you help with grocery shopping this week?"* is clearer than hoping someone will offer.

Instead of *"I'm tired."* ➔ **Try** *"With this fatigue, my body has no energy reserves—even small tasks can exhaust me for the rest of the day."*

Making Changes That Stick

- **Start with one thing:** Choose the area that feels most manageable right now. Small wins build momentum.
- **Set realistic goals:** "I'll walk for 10 minutes three times this week" is more achievable than "I'll exercise every day."
- **Track what helps:** Keep notes about which activities or foods make you feel better or worse.
- **Be kind to yourself:** Some days will be harder than others. That's part of living with PMR, not a failure on your part.
- **Celebrate progress:** Notice improvements, even small ones. They matter.

YOUR RESOURCE FOR PMR INFORMATION AND UPDATES

Learn more at [GHLF.org/LivePMR](https://ghlf.org/LivePMR)
or scan the QR code!



You can use your phone's
camera to scan the code!

