

Background

- Sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 has been described as a form of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS) (Komaroff & Bateman, 2021; Poenaru et al., 2021).
- Etiology may be attributed to injury to brain, lungs, heart, and other internal organs.
- Graded therapeutic exercise, once a recommended strategy, may increase post-exertional malaise (Poenaru et al., 2021).
- This disrupts activities of daily living (Sapra & Bhandari, 2021).

Post-exertional malaise results in activity restriction for millions of people living in the U.S (Valdez, et al., 2020), including reduction or cessation of paid employment (Vink & Vink-Niese, 2019).

Post COVID-19 and ME/CFS

There is insufficient evidence that COVID-19 is a trigger for CFS/ME, however, there are many important similarities (Poenaru et al., 2021).

- Rest may be the best option for some individuals to avoid extreme lasting fatigue especially if the person experiences post-exertional malaise.

Treatment for CFS possibly linked to COVID-19 does not include Graded Exercise Therapy (GET) because of the post-exertional malaise that patients report leaves them bedbound for several days (Poenaru et al., 2021).

- Delegation of labor may be required, along with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy approaches for addressing beliefs and self-image concerns.

Role of Occupational Therapy

The primary role of OT in promoting energy conservation:

- Prioritize assessment(s)
- Create energy conservation habits and routines
- Modify/adapt heavy energy expenditure occupations
- Organize for efficiency and productivity

Evaluation

Only the highest priority assessments should be used.

- Identify the most crucial occupational performance problems
- Utilize an assessment that meets the specific needs of performance problems

There are many great high-quality, open-source assessment tools available for free. Check the QR code in the right-hand corner for more information.

Assessment Tools

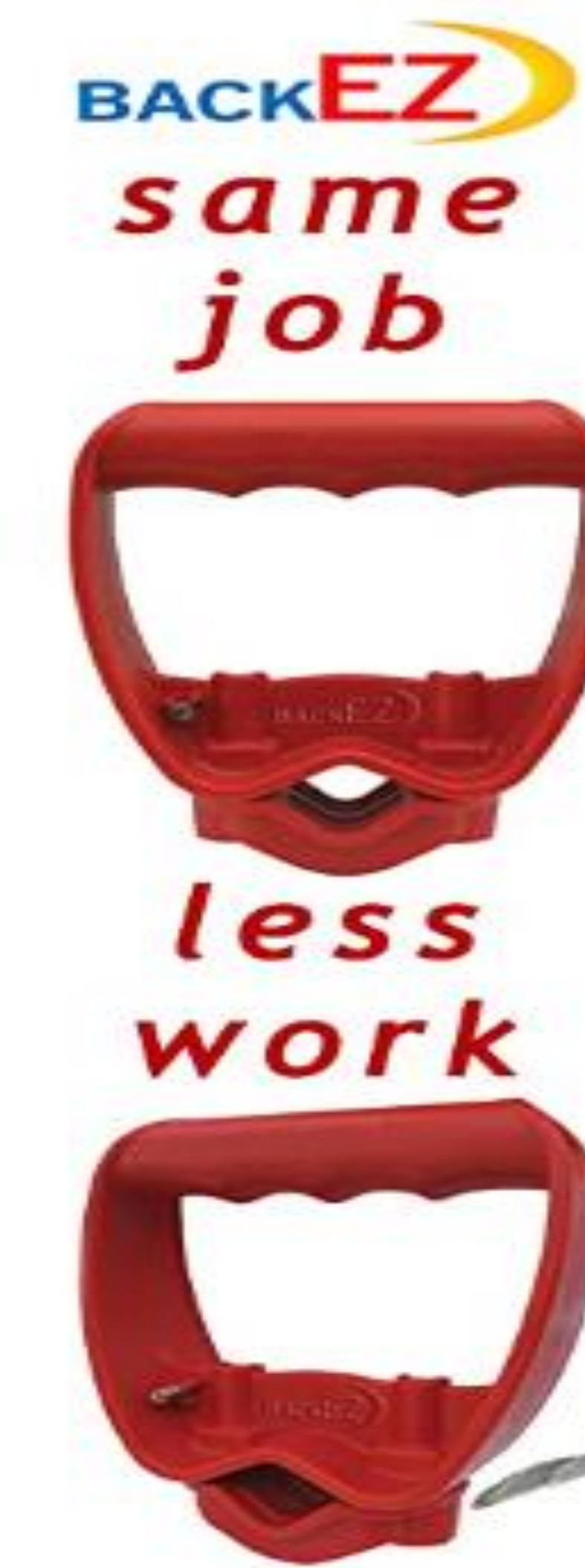
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| Beck Depression Inventory | Detects depressive symptoms |
| Canadian Occupational Performance Measure | Client-reported occupational performance, satisfaction, and importance |
| Fatigue Severity Scale (FSS) /Fatigue Impact Scale (FIS) | A measure of the impact of fatigue on a client |
| Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale | Self-report measure of optimistic self-beliefs |
| Health Assessment Questionnaire (HAQ-DI) | Measure of functional status |
| Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) | Measure of anxiety and depression in a general medical population |
| Life Satisfaction Questionnaire | Measures satisfaction across different domains of life |
| Metabolic Equivalent (METs) | Chart to formulate metabolic equivalents to assess occupations for appropriateness |
| Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale | Scale to measure a client's mindfulness |
| Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) | Pain rating |

Intervention

- Reduce steps:** have all necessary tools ready to complete multiple steps
- Assistive technology:** reduce energy expenditure with ergonomically-designed tools and equipment that reduce strain and increase productivity. Use cognitive prosthetics to compensate for brain fog (and to delegate memory tasks).
- Create rest break schedules:** set timers to rest to allow adequate resting.
- Prevention:** limit heat exposure and ensure client adequately hydrates.
- Promote mental health:** incorporate healthy attitudes, perspectives, and beliefs.

Assistive Technology Devices for Energy Conservation

Long-reach cultivator by PETA LTD (left); **Gardening Stool** by vertex (lower left); **Back EZ handle attachment** by BackEZ (lower right)



References, Links, and More

Disclosure: This project is a collaboration with the University of New Mexico, New Mexico State University, National AgrAbility, New Mexico AgrAbility and Mandy's Farm. The presenters have no financial interest with any assessment/intervention strategies or products discussed in this poster.



Severe Fatigue

Brain Fog

Sleep Problems

Autonomic Dysfunction

Post Exertional Malaise