

NEWS LESSON

Tired After a Day of Sitting Down

BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. When can a day of sitting still leave someone exhausted?
2. What makes your mind feel crowded?
3. Would you rather take a quiet break or do something completely different?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**cognitive**	☐	A	to do with thinking and remembering
2	**fatigue**	☐	B	planning things so that they happen well
3	**participants**	☐	C	a feeling of being very tired
4	**concentrate**	☐	D	very firm, with no room to change
5	**workloads**	☐	E	to put all your attention on one thing
6	**professional**	☐	F	the amounts of work that people have to do
7	**organising**	☐	G	the people who take part in a study
8	**strict**	☐	H	a person trained to do a skilled job, like a doctor

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

Thinking, remembering and deciding all use energy. In one 2025 study, tired people avoided the harder task even when the reward was bigger.

1 You have spent the day at home answering emails, paying bills and sorting things out. You have hardly walked anywhere. Yet by the evening, even choosing a film seems difficult. Why are you so tired? Mental work uses energy too. We need to concentrate, remember information and make decisions. When we do these things for a long time, our minds can start to feel exhausted. This feeling is often called mental or cognitive fatigue.

2 In a 2025 study published in the Journal of Neuroscience, researchers asked people to do demanding thinking tasks. Afterwards, participants were less willing to choose a task that needed more mental effort, even when it offered a bigger reward. The study involved 28 people, so we should not treat it as an explanation for all tiredness.

3 The research suggests that mental fatigue can affect what we feel ready to do next. After a difficult day, cooking dinner or organising tomorrow's plans may seem much harder than usual. This does not mean we are lazy. It means our energy and willingness to concentrate may have changed.

4 Stress, poor sleep, illness and many other things can also cause tiredness. Feeling exhausted for weeks without a clear reason should not automatically be blamed on too many decisions. It may be important to speak to a healthcare professional.

5 Mental tiredness can also make ordinary choices feel surprisingly important. Imagine arriving home hungry after a busy day. You have several meals you could cook, but choosing one seems difficult. You may end up ordering food or eating the easiest thing available. This does not mean your brain cannot make decisions. It may mean you do not feel ready for another demanding task.

6 People sometimes find that planning meals in advance or sharing out household jobs makes evenings easier. However, turning every part of life into a strict schedule can also create pressure. Rest can include enjoyable activities that do not ask too much of us. And if feeling tired becomes a regular problem, it is sensible to look beyond a busy day for possible causes.

7 Short breaks, reasonable workloads and time away from demanding tasks may help some people. But there is no magic solution for everybody. What the research reminds us is simple: a busy mind can feel tired even when the body has spent most of the day sitting down.

Sources: Journal of Neuroscience. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. The study explains all kinds of tiredness. T F NG
2. Stress, poor sleep and illness can also cause tiredness. T F NG
3. The tired people in the study preferred easier tasks, even when a harder task gave a bigger reward. T F NG
4. Mental fatigue affects younger people more than older ones. T F NG
5. The writer says that people who feel tired after thinking all day are lazy. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

exhausted	journey	pressure	reward	schedule	sensible	willing

1. After three nights with no sleep, she felt completely _____ and could hardly stand.
2. Ben is always _____ to help his neighbours, even late at night.
3. The company gave every player a small _____ for finishing first.
4. Too much _____ at work can make people feel stressed all the time.
5. A _____ person eats well and goes to bed on time.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. Last Friday, I _____ home very late and fell asleep on the sofa. (COME)
2. She has _____ at her desk since nine o'clock. (SIT)
3. The results of the study _____ in a science journal. (PUBLISH)
4. After work, I enjoy _____ a long walk. (TAKE)
5. He was too tired _____ a big meal. (COOK)

7 Language focus: prepositions

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Many adjectives and verbs are followed by one fixed small word. Learn the pair together, for example good at.

at	for	into	of	on	over	with

1. I'm tired _____ answering the same emails every day.
2. Thank you _____ helping me with the report.
3. I rely _____ coffee to get through the afternoon.
4. He's very good _____ planning his week.
5. She shared the housework _____ her brother.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. What kind of break helps when you are tired of making decisions?
2. What could a workplace change before telling people to manage stress better?
3. Should feeling tired be enough reason to stop for a while?

9 Role-play: who cooks tonight?

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the tired partner

You've spent the whole day at a desk, answering emails and making decisions. You're exhausted and you don't want to cook or even choose dinner. Ask for help and suggest a simple plan.

Student B · the other partner

You've had a busy day too, and you're hungry. You think sitting down all day isn't really tiring. Ask questions, then agree a fair plan for tonight and for the rest of the week.

Useful phrases

I've had a really long day, and I can't think any more.

I know I've been sitting down, but my head is exhausted.

Could you choose something for dinner tonight?

I'd cook, but I've got no energy left.

How about we share the cooking this week?

That's fair, as long as we're both happy with it.

Afterwards, tell the class: what plan did you agree, and who got the better deal?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 A · 2 C · 3 G · 4 E · 5 F · 6 H · 7 B · 8 D

4 True, false or not given

1 F · 2 T · 3 T · 4 NG · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 exhausted · 2 willing · 3 reward · 4 pressure · 5 sensible

6 Verb forms

1 came · 2 sat · 3 were published · 4 taking · 5 to cook

7 Language focus

1 of · 2 for · 3 on · 4 at · 5 with

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