

Coping Strategies: Time passes

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You've probably come a long way since your initial diagnosis and you should acknowledge this. That's not to say that life is suddenly easy for everyone. Continue to set small achievable goals and take time out for yourself. If you feel ready, you might like to set some long-term goals or review any previous goals you might have set.

Fitting HIV into your life can be time consuming. You may find it difficult to juggle work, your social life, doctor appointments and remembering treatments. It's normal to feel overwhelmed and time pressured by the new demands that HIV places on your lifestyle.

As time passes, you might find you start thinking more about sex and you may feel ready to have sex again. Or perhaps you never stopped having sex since your diagnosis. Some people say they feel frightened of rejection because of their HIV status and this holds them back from a healthy sex life. However, every person – regardless of his or her HIV status – has the right to a full and active sex life.

If the fear of rejection concerns you, it can help to remember that you've probably faced and had to deal with rejection in the past for many different reasons.

The magazine [Positive Living](#) [1] may be a good source of information. It is available from your local gay and lesbian community newspaper, or from your local AIDS Council or PLWHA organisation, and the NAPWA website.

If you are in a relationship and it's starting to feel rocky now that the initial shock has passed, consider talking to a counsellor or seeking out a couple's counsellor if you both want to work on the relationship. You have been through a major life change and you need to give yourself credit for all the steps you've taken so far. Try to remember that this is an adjustment you both need to make in your relationship.

For people taking treatments, it may be a good time to take another look at how you've been going. Are you happy or finding it difficult? You have the right to make decisions about starting or stopping treatments. If you're not taking treatments, continue to learn as much as you can so that you are well informed about any future decisions you make.

It's advisable to start thinking about your long-term health. Good eating patterns and regular exercise can be beneficial to your long-term health and will put you in a good position to manage living with HIV. Dieticians are available at most public hospitals to help you improve your diet if this is an issue.

Checklist

- It's normal to feel overwhelmed by the increased time pressures that HIV places on you
- Good eating patterns and regular exercise can benefit your long-term health
- You have the right to a full and active sex life

Zeb: "Now I just think – you've got it, you might as well go along with your life. There's no use burying your head in the sand."

[Sexually transmitted infections](#) [2]^{up} [3]

Links:

[1] <http://www.napwa.org.au/pl>

[2] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/next-steps/sexually-transmitted-infections>

[3] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/next-steps>