

ZEBRA MEAL · THE DAZZLE MEMBERSHIP

The Energy & Pacing *Toolkit*

Map your envelope. Spot the whisper. Spend on purpose.

A member deep-dive from Julie Griffis, PT, the full companion to the free "Your Energy Envelope" Snack. For hypermobile, POTSie, PEM-prone, sensitive-system bodies.

The physiology under the *fatigue*

This isn't deconditioning, laziness, or anxiety. Several mechanisms stack in constellation bodies:

STABILIZATION TAX (HEDS)

Lax connective tissue means muscles moonlight as ligaments. Your "resting" body is running a background stabilization program all day, a cost most bodies never pay.

ORTHOSTATIC TAX (POTS / DYSAUTONOMIA)

Upright posture demands constant cardiovascular compensation, heart rate climbs, blood pools, the autonomic system works overtime. Standing still is often the single most expensive posture you own.

THE BROKEN RECHARGE (ME/CFS & PEM)

Energy production and recovery are impaired at the cellular level. Exertion past the envelope doesn't just tire you, it triggers post-exertional malaise: a delayed (24-72h), disproportionate, multi-system crash. PEM is the boundary line pacing exists to respect.

THE FLARE WILDCARD (MCAS, HORMONES, WEATHER, SLEEP)

Your envelope resizes without asking. That's why pacing is a daily estimate, not a fixed plan.

Plan from today's body, not Tuesday's.

One week of gentle *bookkeeping*

For seven days, jot spending and signals. No judgment, no fixing yet, you're an anthropologist studying one interesting zebra.

DAY	BIGGEST SPENDS (TYPE: P / C / S / E / UPRIGHT)	EARLY SIGNALS NOTICED	NEXT-DAY BILL? (0-3)
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thu			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR

- **Your PEM delay:** how many hours between overspend and bill? (Most zebras: 24-48.)
- **Your expensive categories:** many people discover sensory or upright spending dwarfs "exercise."
- **Your whisper signals:** the 2-3 early warnings that reliably precede YOUR crashes, word-finding slips, light intolerance, wired-but-tired, heart-rate creep, sudden irritability.

HEART RATE AS A BUDGET METER

A rough real-time gauge: find your morning resting heart rate. During activity, if HR drifts well above its usual for that task, or resting HR is up ~10+ bpm on waking, the envelope is smaller today. This is a flashlight, not a rulebook; individualized zones belong in 1:1 care.

The pacing *playbook*

1 · REST BEFORE THE WALL

Schedule rest like medication, by the clock, not by collapse. If you only rest when you're wrecked, you're always paying interest.

2 · CHUNK AND SWITCH

Cap tasks (start with 20 minutes), then switch systems or stop, even mid-task. Alternate: physical → seated/cognitive → true rest. Two systems never back-to-back.

3 · MATCH THE REST TO THE SPEND

YOU SPENT...	RESTORATIVE REST LOOKS LIKE...
Physical / upright	Horizontal, feet up, supported joints
Cognitive	No decisions, no reading, no phone, audio quiet or gentle
Sensory	Dim, quiet, low-texture; eyes closed beats scrolling
Emotional / social	Alone-time without masking; co-regulation with a safe person or animal

THE 50% RULE (STARTER SETTING)

Estimate what you think you can do today, then plan half. If you end the day with energy left, wonderful: that surplus is what stabilizes the system and, over months, is what any gentle capacity-building gets built on.

4 · FLARE PROTOCOL

When the bill arrives anyway: drop to floor-of-envelope activities, hydrate/salt per your care plan, aggressive rest-matching, zero guilt, a crash is data, not failure. Resume at 50% of pre-crash levels, not 100%.

When pacing *isn't working*

IT FEELS LIKE...	USUALLY MEANS...	TRY...
"I pace and still crash"	A spending category is invisible to you (often sensory, upright, or masking)	Re-run the 7-day map tracking ONLY that category
"My envelope keeps shrinking"	Rolling PEM, each crash starts before the last one clears	A deliberate stabilization fortnight well inside the envelope; flag to your clinician
"I can't stop pushing"	The pattern is often nervous-system + identity, not knowledge	Externalize it: timers, body doubles, pre-commitments; self-compassion is a pacing tool
"Rest makes me wired"	Wired-but-tired = autonomic arousal, not surplus energy	Regulation before rest: grounding, breath, horizontal + warmth

BRING TO YOUR CLINICIAN

- Steadily rising resting heart rate, fainting, or new chest pain, not a pacing problem.
- Envelope shrinking for 4+ weeks despite honest pacing.
- New neurological symptoms, unexplained weight change, or fevers.

KEEP GOING

Pacing is the prerequisite skill for everything else in your recovery toolkit, including the gentle strength and capacity work in **The Movement Primer**. Envelope first. Then, carefully, we make it bigger.