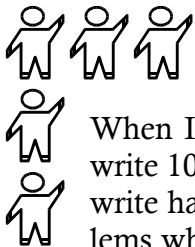


Living with ME is like facing a huge mountain. Just doing ordinary things may be impossible. Good friends can help by sending regular, friendly notes and by paying short visits (someone with ME can easily become exhausted and ill if you stay too long).

If your friend can attend school, make sure others understand what's needed and offer to carry bags if you can.

ME is a serious illness that doesn't just make people tired - they may be in pain, may not be able to think straight, may need extra clothes to keep warm and may have many other symptoms. They are listed in the Quick Tour of ME at www.tymestrust.org.



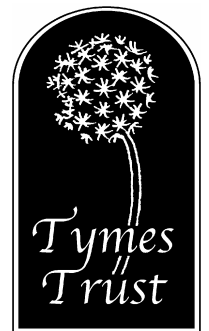
How To Be A Good Friend

When I was first asked to write about my friend, my first thoughts were "No problem, I can easily write 1000 words about my best friend Sarah." But now I sit at my computer and I don't know how to write half the stuff I want to say. Not knowing how to say things to Sarah was one of my worst problems when I found out she had ME. I didn't know what to say or how to act when I saw her. I didn't know if I should be constantly asking her if she was feeling alright or whether that would only make her feel worse. I had never had to deal with a friend with an illness before. If you were to ask me today "How can I be a good friend to someone with ME?" I guess my best advice would be to just be yourself. In my opinion, the worst thing you can do is change the way you act. I found this out as I went along. Sarah is exactly the same person she was before she got ME, she still loves a good old gossip and talking about the TV programme that was on last night. If she hasn't changed, then why should I?

by Sarah's friend Kerry



*ME ~
and my Friends*





Friends

Sarah-Louise

Kerry, Megan and Hanh had been friends with me for a year or two before I had a relapse of ME. I was afraid at first that they would just forget about me, or that they would not believe me, but they have stuck by me and never doubted me. → → → → →

Kerry, Megan and Sarah's Top Tips For Being A Good Friend

- * If your friend has ME, don't treat them differently - they are still the same person. ☎
- * Be there if they need to talk. ☎
- * Do your best to involve them in things but take into consideration how they may feel. ☎
- * Help them keep in touch with what's happening at school, college or work. ☎
- * Your friend may find it too tiring to come and see you, so go to see them.
 - ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎
- * Don't be afraid to ask your friend questions about ME or how they feel. Try not to overdo the "Are you feeling alright?" bit - this can be quite annoying! ☎
- * Don't be insulted if they suddenly can't make it to an event - this is simply due to the fluctuating nature of ME. Be prepared to do things at short notice and to take things as they come. ☎
- * Find out a bit about ME but accept that the person who has it is the expert - only they really know how they feel and what they can and can't do. ☎
- * Tailor your activities to make it as easy as possible for your friend to take part - this includes finding out about access and facilities and taking into account sensitivities to light and noise and the need to conserve as much energy as possible. ☎



Our 12 year old son James was sitting in Dr Alan Franklin's consulting room, having been diagnosed with ME. "Well James," Dr Franklin said kindly, "ME is like a mountain. Will you try to scale it, give up and turn back, or negotiate your way around it?" James hesitated. "I think James will try to negotiate his way around the mountain," I suggested, "as long as he has plenty of sherpas to back him up."

Sally Player



My friends never make me feel any less than them and they do not treat me differently. They always seem to know what to say and do and they can always make me laugh - even when I'm not feeling all that good.

Our friendship, I feel, has become stronger and it is something I value deeply. I could not wish for better friends than Kerry, Megan and Hanh and I would just like to thank them very much.

