



# Pacing and Activity

## Pacing

- Involves the planning of how an activity will be carried out while still managing your pain.
- Means you will not push through your pain to get an activity done.
- Means you will not only do things when you feel you are having a good day.
- Is meant to help break away from "all-or-nothing" as well as "good day bad day" vicious cycles.
- Will help you develop more consistency, and hopefully increase your activity involvement over time.

## What is included in Pacing?

- Taking your time to perform an activity.
- Incorporating break times/recovery periods into daily activities before it is too late.
- Doing things at a slower pace.
- Planning your day ahead of time based on your goals.
- Taking time to analyze the activity before you start.
- Breaking activities into 'chunks' or smaller amounts.
- Prioritizing your activities. You only have so much time and energy in a day.
- Using relaxation techniques.
- Using stretch breaks.
- Giving yourself permission to stop before you push into increased pain.
- Communicating your plans to others around you so that they understand and support you as you work at making changes.
- Asking for help/delegating all or part of a task to someone else.

### **Barriers to pacing**

- Believing (or thinking others believe) that pacing is 'lazy'.
- Time pressures.
- Old habits/your upbringing/values.
- Getting lost in activity you enjoy/when you are feeling good.
- Comparing current abilities to what you could do before.

- Never had to ask for help before.
- Control such as 'others won't do it as good as me'.
- Frustration/anger.
- Difficulty accepting that you have to do things in a different way than you did before/than how others do things.
- Expectations: others and yours.
- Pride/ego.
- Fear.
- Rewards/respect for being a hard worker.

#### Vicious cycles and rollercoasters

- Procrastination: putting things off to a 'good day'.
- Overdoing it on a 'good day' and trying to catch up.
- Trying to stay ahead of the pain or 'outrun the pain'.
- Some people need to slow down on 'good days', others need to get going on 'bad days'.

By slowing down, over time you can actually gain time/energy.

#### Establish a baseline

• Try doing half (guideline) of what you can do on an average day before getting into pain, and then build gradually from there.

#### Ideas of ways to take a break besides just stopping:

- Switch to a different task.
- Change position alternate between standing and sitting or between sitting and standing.
- Use relaxation/deep breathing.
- Do stretches or some gentle exercise.
- Go for a walk.

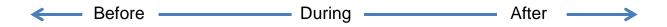
#### Different ways to pace

- Do less at one time spread activities/responsibilities across the day, week or month.
- Get rid of unnecessary tasks.
- Do the same amount, but give yourself extra time to take more breaks.
- Alternate between heavier and lighter tasks not too many heavy or light tasks back to back.

## Strategies to be more successful in pacing

- Take time beforehand to plan how and when to take breaks.
- Make a daily/weekly schedule.
- Use a clock/alarm/another person to cue you when to take a break.
- Put Post-it notes in places you'll see through the day with reminders such as 'slow down', 'stop and breathe', 'Rome wasn't built in a day'.
- Use positive statements as you are making change. 'Remember change takes time', 'It will still be there tomorrow.' 'I am doing my best.'
- Pay attention to cues in your body/emotions such as holding breath, tension in certain body parts; thought 'Just get it done!'
- Analyze how it went afterwards: did you take enough breaks, what went well, what will you change next time?

## **Timelines with pacing**





Keeping active is important! It's how you plan to do an activity that can help keep you from getting in trouble!