

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!