

Pacing

Pain Management Service

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

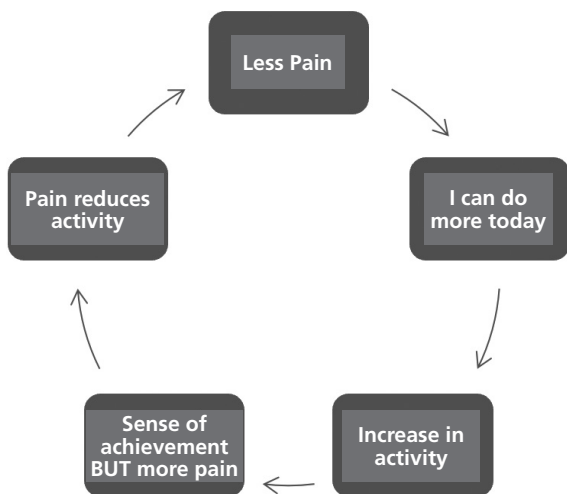
- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

Introduction

You have been given this leaflet by your healthcare professional as they have identified that you would benefit from exploring a technique called pacing to help reduce the distress of your pain and manage everyday activities.

Persistent Pain

Persistent pain may have an effect on everyday tasks and activities. It might be that the demands of everyday life mean you feel the need to push through the pain. When feeling ok, overdoing things or doing too much can leave you experiencing more pain, and exhaustion and also affect your mood. Feelings of frustration that you are unable to do what you want to do. This is referred to as over-activity pacing. Often the pain can take a few hours, days or longer to settle back down. In this time you may not be able to do the things you enjoy or wish to, again impacting how you feel.



The opposite is underactivity pacing. Moving less and sitting or lying down more is understandable when you are in pain. This can lead to a decrease in function which in turn makes muscles weaker and joints stiffer which can make moving more painful.

You may find that you swing between doing too much; overactivity and then doing too little; underactivity as your pain has increased or flared up.

This is known as the BOOM BUST Cycle. This can become a regular pattern, increased activity followed by less activity due to a flare up of your pain and impact on your mood. It can leave you feeling fearful of certain activities or tasks as they have caused your pain to increase. This can make you hesitate to do things, choosing not to do the activity you would like to due to fear of how your body might respond. While this means that you are not making the pain worse at the moment, you may miss out on things you would like to do.

You may recognise that you have;

- Difficult in joining in with family and friends
- Unsure of your capabilities and what you can and cannot do
- Unable to plan ahead or make regular commitments
- Inconsistent with your activity levels
- Worried and anxious about how you will manage in the future

What is Pacing?

Pacing is a flexible and personal approach to balancing activity without causing your pain to increase or flare up. It requires an awareness of your own tolerance levels to activity. Once this is established you can build on this very gradually to help you increase your activities. This will help you avoid booming and busting and keep control of your pain.

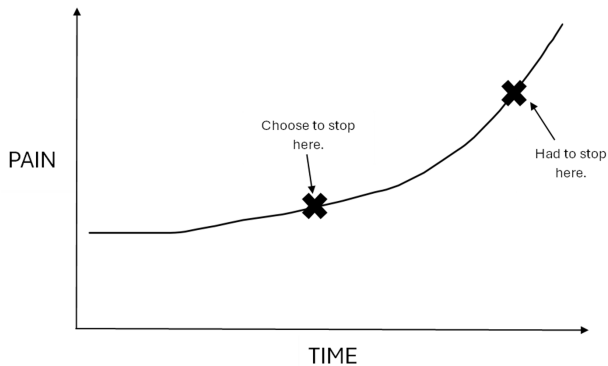
If you are prone to trying to cram in as much activity as you can in the morning, and have to sleep during the afternoon or the next day to recover, pacing helps you to break this habit. Similarly it discourages you from gathering energy through the day and then attempting a burst of activity later in the afternoon or evening, demonstrated in the graph below.

Getting started with Pacing.

Finding your tolerance level or baseline is the starting point for pacing. Knowing your tolerance level helps to avoid booms and busts in activity and keep control of your pain. It can be helpful to choose two or three activities that you value and things that you would like to be doing.

Exploring and experimenting with how long in time (minutes) you can do an activity without increasing your pain. Tolerance levels could also be measured in time, distance or repetitions.

The graph below demonstrates when choosing to stop an activity before your pain starts to increase instead of having to stop because of the pain.



Think about what you can realistically do now and NOT what you used to do. Experiment on several different days to test it out and find what is right for you. If you estimate it wrong and do too much, that's okay, you may not get it correct the first time. Have a flexible approach to finding your tolerance levels. Next time reduce the level and see how that feels instead. Remember different activities will have different baselines, so test them out individually.

Planning

Once you have tolerance levels explore planning your activities. Prioritise what is the most important activity you need to do that day or for the week. Planning helps you stick to what you can do rather than what you feel you can do, and avoid using your pain as a guide. Breaking activities into smaller manageable chunks and plan rest breaks or activities when you are in different postures or positions. Explore if you can do activities in a different way or do you still need to do them at all? Do you and the people around you that you can delegate activities to.

Activity Planning

Using an activity planner to help to pace, plan and priorities your activities on a daily or weekly basis. You can create your own or use one from the resources section below.

How will Pacing benefit me?

Positive changes that people with pain have reported they notice after they have learnt how to pace.

- **In Control** - Individuals feel they have more control over their symptoms and activity levels
- **Less Medication** - They are less dependent on medication, resulting in fewer unpleasant side effects
- **Brighter Moods** - Life becomes more enjoyable as they can participate in activities regularly with fewer flare-ups
- **Better Sleep**- People who learn how to pace themselves often experience improved sleep at night
- **More Energy** - They feel an increase in their energy levels and motivation
- **Doing More** - Individuals are able to engage in more activities, whether alone or with family and friends. They can plan for a better social life, knowing their symptoms are more manageable
- **Fewer Flare-Ups** - Flare-ups are shorter in duration and easier to manage

Resources

Pain Health: Pacing and goal setting

<https://painhealth.csse.uwa.edu.au/pain-module/pacing-and-goal-setting/>

Living Well with Pain: Pacing

<https://livewellwithpain.co.uk/resources-for-people-with-pain/ten-footsteps-to-living-well-with-pain/pacing/>

Additional information

The information in this leaflet is not intended to replace your doctor's advice. If you require more information or have any questions please contact the Pain Team on 01902 695122.

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。