

# Graded exposure

to

**ACTIVITY**





## Graded Exposure to Activity

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## Importance of Activity for Health and well being

if you missed this session please try and watch this 5 minute video clip on importance of activity:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3F5Sly9JQao>

Firstly after this video do you think you need to increase your activity levels to meet the minimum guide of at least 30 minutes of moderate activity per day?

If yes, please don't start this right away, we will discuss how to build up activity very slowly, but 30 minutes might be a time to aim towards, as a long term goal in the future.

If no..... do you need to reduce your activities/ keep them the same/ change or adapt activities?



## If you want to become more active.... Firstly

- Think about a physical activity that **you enjoy** or enjoyed before you were in pain
- Think of an activity you feel confident doing, don't choose something to begin with that you don't feel confident doing as you will unlikely do it, choose something easy to start with
- Are there any barriers ? motivation / time / support / money / costs
- How might you overcome these barriers?

- What would motivate you to do this activity? Nice Weather / Friend coming along – choose an activity you can do if bad weather and also if you friend can't make it, so you have options.

E.g go Plan for a 5 minute walk on good weather days or 5 minute tai chi indoor if raining.



## Where do I start?

**The good news is that we would advise that you start with something very easy and low paced and unlikely to flare up your pain. Think of an activity and time that you think you would manage on a bad day, then half the amount. E,g on bad day could manage 4 minutes of walking before a flare up might start. Start with 1-2 minutes. Then you are nowhere near flaring your pain up, but still doing activity regularly. If you are not sure, it might be trial and error to work out a good starting point, but best to start low and build up, dependant on pain response.**

- What is your activity you have chosen?
- What amount of this activity could you manage on a bad day before a flare up of pain? e.g 4 minutes.
- What is you starting /baseline time (half the time above, bad day e. g 2 mins).

- Plan to do this activity daily even on the bad days if possible, but you could adjust if pain very bad, e.g 1-2minute walk t lunchtime after some rest, on good days and ok days and on bad days 1 minute of seated or lying exercises / tai chi.
- Always try and keep some activity into your plan daily even if it's really bad day, very small amounts at a time are better than nothing at all. Plan different positions e.g. activity in Lying, sitting, standing etc.



### **Plan best time of day:**

Try and look at your pacing chart / diary – later in this booklet, where in your day would this activity best fit to minimise flare up? e.g before and after rest / blue.



### **When should I start to increase the activity?**

Try and build up slowly, might be about 30 seconds -1 minute per week but there might be weeks when you have to reduce the amount, this is normal, you may feel that you are taking some steps forward but one or two back, this is normal in the pain management journey. It's all a learning curve, discovering what is best for you and how to do it.

As a general rule, if your pain scores, fatigue or other symptoms/ flare ups are currently ok overall in last week and effort during this new activity, is low, then add on another 30-60seconds, if your pain and symptoms and effort ok, after this additions, add more again the next week. If pain/symptoms worse and or effort is too high, reduce slightly by 30-60 seconds again and so on.



## I don't really have any ideas on activities?



- Walking
- Swimming or pool exercises / hydrotherapy
- Tai Chi (you will get a quick taster session of this in the group)
- Cycling
- Gentle Gardening
- Pilates / Core Stability Exercises
- Balance / Strengthening Exercises (you will be shown some in group – adapt to your own needs)
- Stretches (you will be shown some in group – adapt to your own needs)
- Climbing steps / step ups
- Practising sit to stand
- Dancing



## Useful Resources:

- **Tai Chi** - 5 minutes a day of tai chi based exercises – research supports tai chi for pain management and depression.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEOS2zoyQw4>
- **Tai Chi Classes** available across Highland  
– e.g Bannatynes Inverness, Maggies Centre.
- **LGOWIT** run activity groups e.g Tai Chi and Bocha, Gardening:  
<http://www.lgowit.org>
- **High Life Highland** – Affordable activity centres across Highland groups/ classes / swimming pools / gyms.  
[www.higlifehand.com](http://www.higlifehand.com)
- **Atago Groups** – Classes designed for the more mature adult, to improve flexibility, balance and strength. £2.60 per class Every Tuesday in Inverness at:  

Jameron Cameron Community Centre  
12.15-1pm  
01463 718773  
[jamescameroncc@highlifehand.com](mailto:jamescameroncc@highlifehand.com)

or: Spectrum Centre  
1.30-2.15pm  
01463 221842  
[info@spectrumcentre.co.uk](mailto:info@spectrumcentre.co.uk)
- **Step it up Highland**  
or email: [www.pfw.org.uk](http://www.pfw.org.uk)  
or phone: [walking@pfw.org.uk](mailto:walking@pfw.org.uk)  
01463 729997

- **Health walk initiative** aims to promote walking to people from all walks of life, especially for those who are inactive that want to become more active.
- **Fitfellas** – Men only exercises for the over 60's free 45 minute circuit based exercise, coffee and cake.

Phipps hall, Beaulieu  
10 -11am  
lizmclardy1@gmail.com  
07746951151

- **Puffin Pool Dingwall**

[www.puffinpool.co.uk](http://www.puffinpool.co.uk)

tel 01349846414

Self Referral. Assessed by physiotherapist and programme for pool formulated based on your individual needs. Sessions morning, afternoon and evenings most days and Saturday morning. £5 for assessment £2.50 thereafter.

- **Health App** - if you have a smart phone to track and measure your activity levels, sleep, relaxation and mindfulness recordings.



We will fill in this Fitness wheel as a group and this will help you chart areas that you may wish to work on physically such as

balance, strength, flexibility, coordination, upper and lower limb stamina, strength, core strength. This might guide you on which activity/activities to pick.

You could revisit the Fitness Wheel after a month or two and see if there are any changes.



## Fitness Circle

Mark each spoke of the circle depending on how able you are to do each action.

Put a mark in the inner ring if you can't do it at all, in the middle if you feel you were able to do about half and in the outer ring if you have no problems at all.

Outer Circle - Easy

 Managed about half / middle

 Unable to do task





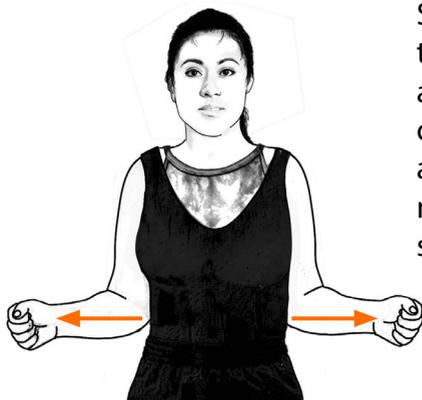
## Some Examples of Exercises



### Arm Strengthening:

1

1. **Shoulder and shoulder / Blade strengthening:** (good for shoulder pain and upper back pain).



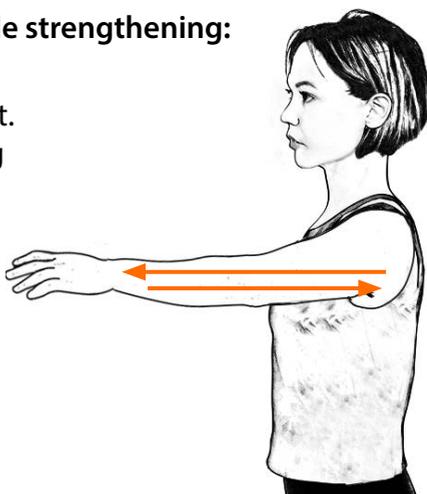
Sit or stand. Keep upper arms close to the sides and elbows at right angles. You may wish to put a towel or magazine to grip between your arm and your side, to stop you moving your arm away from your side.

Turn forearms outwards.  
Repeat 10 times

2. **Shoulder and shoulder / Blade strengthening:**

Lying on your back, elbow straight. (You can also do this one in sitting or standing.)

Straighten your arm towards the ceiling (or out in front of you if sitting or standing), bring your shoulder blade off the floor and slowly lower back down.



If sitting or standing, keep your elbow straight, shoulder blades lightly squeezed and move your whole arm forward (palm of hand should move forward but whole arm straight), movement coming from your shoulder blade area.

Repeat 5 times on each arm.



## Shoulder and Upper Back Stretches:

2



Sit or stand. Clasp your hands together; lift your arms over your head. Breathe in and stretch your hands towards the ceiling.

Breathe out and return to the starting position.

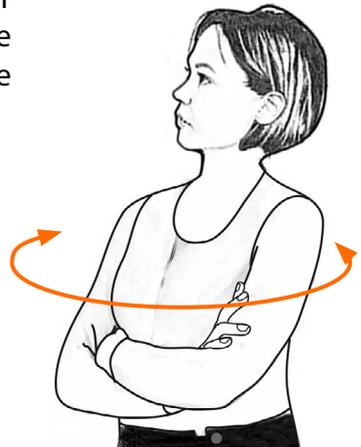
Repeat 5 times

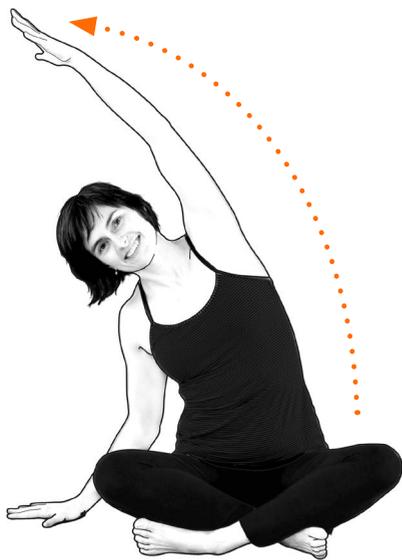
Sit on a chair and clasp your arms on your chest. Keep your buttock still on chair, take a deep breath in and at the same time rotate the upper trunk to one side.

Breathe out and as you breathe out try and turn a little further and hold for a few seconds. Return to centre.

Repeat on other side.

Repeat 5 times each direction.





Sitting or standing, lift one arm.

Bend to the side with your arm reaching over your head.

Breathe in, then breathe out and try and stretch a little further and return to the starting position.

Repeat 5 times each side.

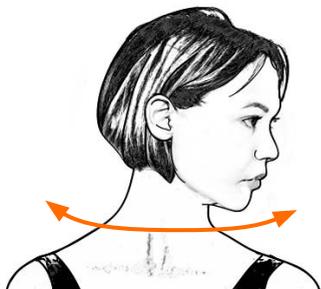


## Neck Exercises:

3

1. Sitting, tuck your chin in, keeping your neck and back straight (not tipping your head forwards or looking down). Your eyes should stay looking forward; imagine you are trying to hold an apple or small ball underneath your chin.

Repeat 5 times.



2. Sitting, turn your head to one side until you feel a stretch. Hold approximately 5 seconds. Repeat to other side.

Repeat 5 times.



1. Sitting, lying down or standing against a wall, practice tilting your pelvis forwards and backwards – hold onto the front of your hip bones and feel them moving forward and backwards.

Repeat 10 times

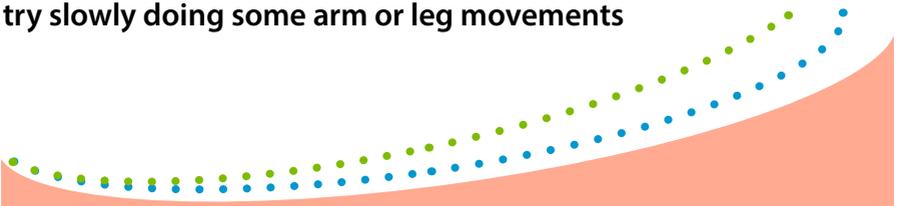


2. **Abdominal and Pelvic Floor Strengthening:** (same position as last exercise):

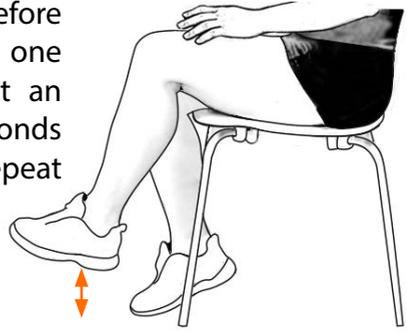
In the same lying position, or sitting or standing or walking or in any comfortable position, imagine that you are trying to tighten up your pelvic floor, start from your back passage (imagining holding in wind), then tighten up the front (as though holding in urine), then tighten up your tummy muscles (as though pulling into a pair of tight jeans) but not breath holding, breath normally if you can, count to 10 out loud as this will help you stop holding your breath. Back, Front, Tummy.

Repeat 10 times

**Once you get good at the static holds,  
try slowly doing some arm or leg movements**



3. In sitting you can tighten as before then slowly practice holding one foot above the ground about an inch off ground hold for 10 seconds and slowly lower down and repeat on other side.



If able practice doing both legs as though slowly cycling a bike, keep back still and don't lean on back of chair or use hands.

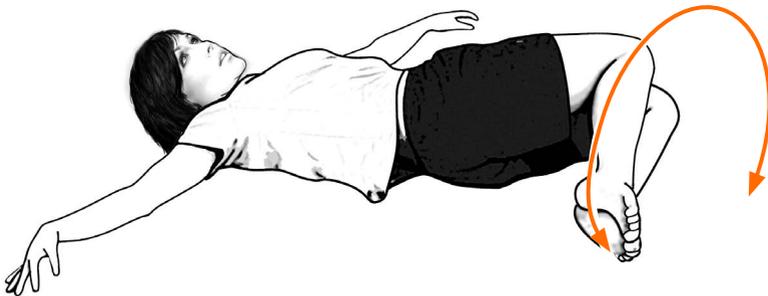
Or in lying practice tightening as above, then slowly slide one heel away from you and towards you again and repeat on other side, then start doing both legs in opposite directions.



### Lower Back Stretches:

5

1. In lying with knee bent, practice slowly rolling knees from side to side. Build up slowly how far you roll your knees away and towards your body again.



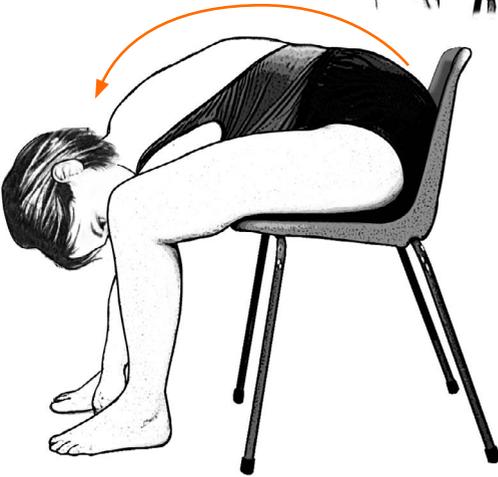
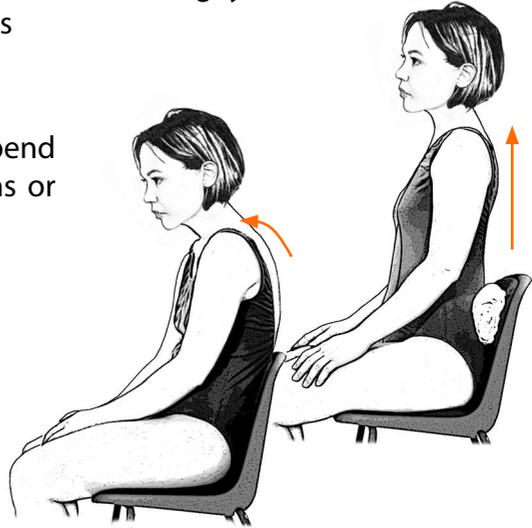
Repeat on both sides for about 1 minute.

## 2. Practice sitting in a chair.

Roll your shoulder and back as though slowly rolling your spine down and sliding your hands down your knees and thighs.

Build up to trying to bend down and reach your shins or even the floor.

Build up gradually.



Repeat 3 times.



• Please fill pacing chart and bring with you on week 3



## Hip Exercises:

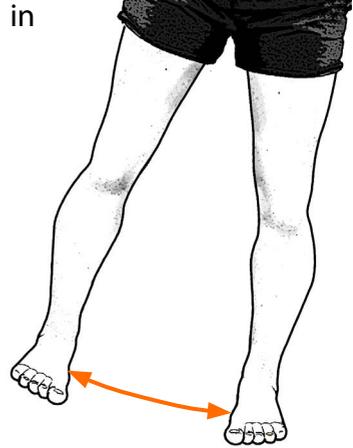
6

Practice in standing or in a pool or in side lying.

Keep your body still and your knee straight. Slowly take your whole leg out to the side (without turning you foot in or out).

Hold for 5 seconds.

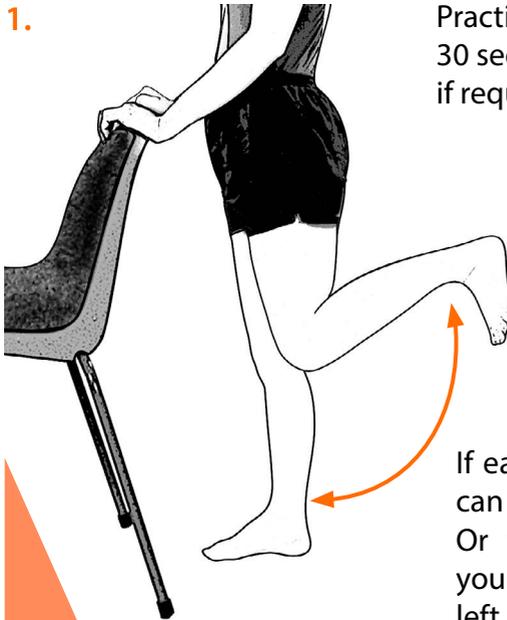
Repeat 10 times.



## Balance Exercises:

7

1.



Practice standing on one leg for 10-30 seconds – hold onto something if required.

Repeat twice on both legs.

If too easy practice standing on a rolled up towel or pillow to make it more wobbly.

If easy, practice passing a ball or can of beans around your back. Or practice reaching up above your head, behind your back and left and right, whilst on one leg.

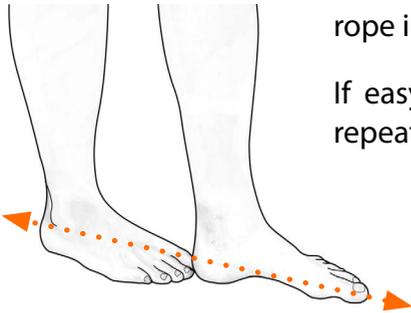
2.

Practice standing with one foot in front of another (as though balancing on a tight rope in circus).

If easy roll up a towel length ways and repeat.

Hold for 10-30 seconds.

Repeat with other foot at front.



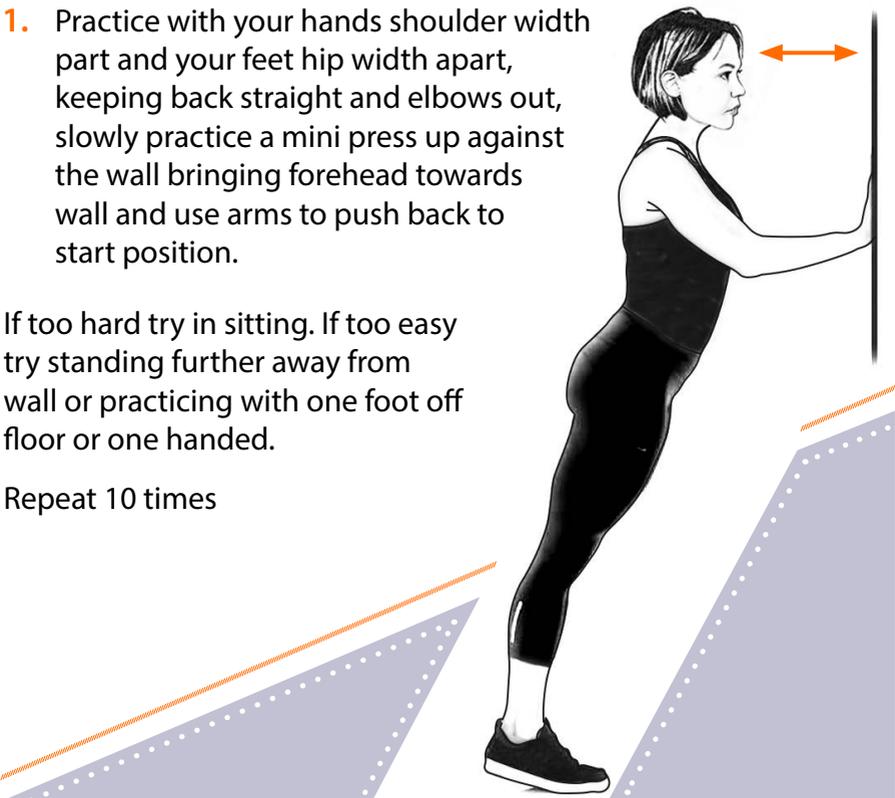
## Upper Body Strengthening:

8

1. Practice with your hands shoulder width apart and your feet hip width apart, keeping back straight and elbows out, slowly practice a mini press up against the wall bringing forehead towards wall and use arms to push back to start position.

If too hard try in sitting. If too easy try standing further away from wall or practicing with one foot off floor or one handed.

Repeat 10 times

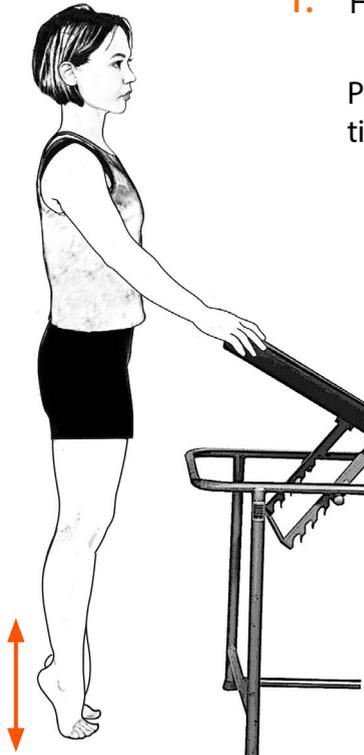




### 1. Heel Raise

Practice going up and down on your tip toes for 10 - 30 seconds.

If easy do on one leg, if too hard use something to hold onto or try heel raises in sitting.



### 2. Step up's

Practice stepping up onto a step and back down again, leading with left leg for 30 seconds, then repeat leading with right leg.

If too easy add light dumbbells or cans of beans or find a high step. If too hard try and find a lower step or use a hand rails to assist with arms.

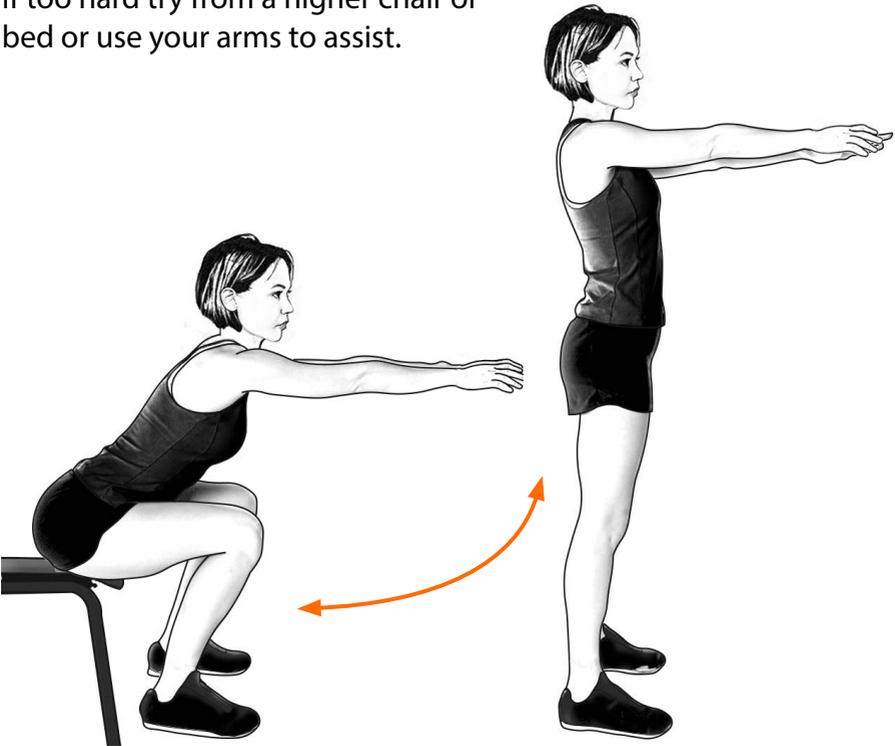


## 2. Sit to Stand

Practice standing up from a chair without using your arms and sit back down again.

Repeat for 30-60 seconds. If too easy try with a lower chair or hold onto something like light dumbbells or cans of beans.

If too hard try from a higher chair or bed or use your arms to assist.





## Pacing Chart:

10

Remember Please pace your exercises use your pacing chart and goal setting to try and plan to build up the exercises that suit your needs.

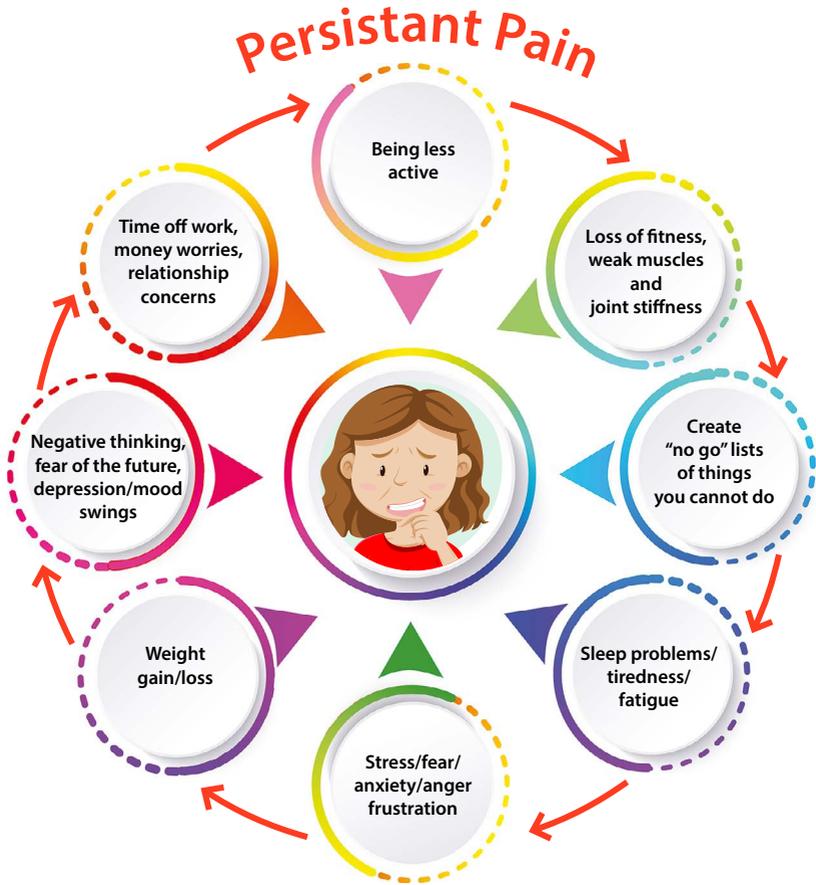
**This log may help document which exercises or pain techniques you have done:**

Name Exercise or other technique	Date	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday



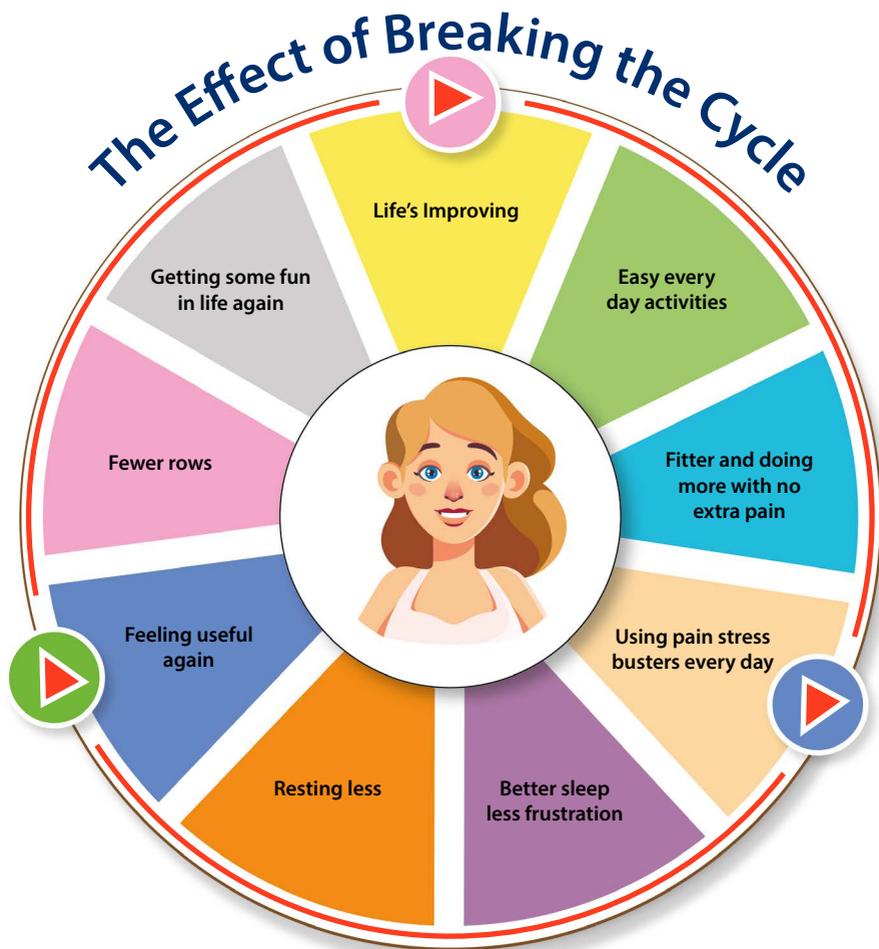


Is this familiar?



Persistent Pain Cycle

See if you can start thinking about things that might help break your cycle of persistent pain...



Is there anything that you have identified yet that could be contributing to your pain being a vicious cycle or flaring up or turning the volume up on your system?

Please write down some things down that is keeping the pain cycle going or keeping the volume turned up.....



*Pacing yourself isn't easy. . . are you the hare or the tortoise? Or a bit of both?*

Do you overdo things at times and flare your pain up? Known as Boom/ Bust Pattern

Do you avoid things in fear of flaring things up? Known as Fear Avoidance

### *Beat the Boom and Bust the Cycle*

#### What does Boom and Bust mean?

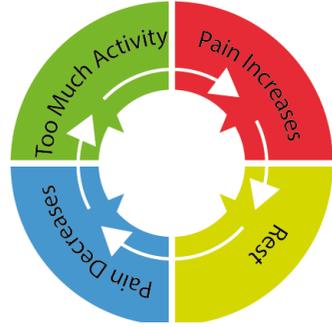
**Boom** is when you do too much activity all at once (maybe on a good day or when a job “needs done”

**Bust** when your pain or fatigue or other symptoms increase following a “boom” of activity and you rest and have minimal activity due to flare up.

This leads to an up and down pattern of flare ups, further stimulation of your nervous system (the volume is being turned up, and therefore likely to be more sensitive next time, bringing pain on quicker, after doing less and less over time.

**Fear Avoidance** Are you scared/ anxious or fearful of activities or situations? If yes, This can lead to a vicious cycle of less activity, low mood, isolation and a more sensitive pain system, as system not use to these feared or avoided activities, so why not introduce some of these important but feared activities to your life gradually that you have been avoiding..... These may be **Social, Fun, Relaxation and Activity/ Physical** e.g. meet a friend for a coffee, go for a short walk, take bath, try a new hobby?

*The Boom and Bust:*



*.....: Pacing*

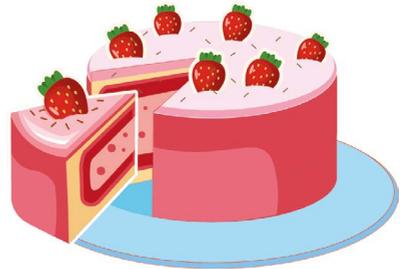
Think of pacing like a large cake in front of you...

*Boom . . . . Eat all the cake at once*

*Now . . . . . Bust!*

*Start with one piece at time . .*

*Split the cake into pieces . . . .*



Can you share the task with others?

- Give away

Do some later that day?

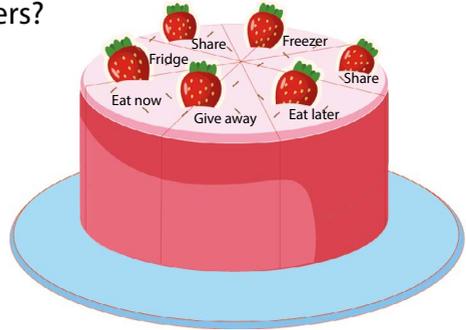
- Eat later

Next day or few days ?

- Fridge

Next Week / month?

- Freezer



Does the task need to be done today or this week?

- Freezer do later and do in smaller chunks if a big task, plan ahead.

It is a life task – e.g preparing lunch, dressed, shower.

Could the task be changed to reduce chances of flare up? E.g shopping online or two small shopping visits rather than one bigger visit...

But don't be a fear avoider either and miss out on some cake, be brave and build up on things you fear.

## Pacing your activities:

13

Try filling in your own pacing chart to see if you are doing anything within your week that could be improved by better pacing, planning ahead and breaking up activities.

Pain Score	4/10... Monday	8/10... Tuesday	4/10... Wednesday	7/10... Thursday	3/10... Friday	6/10... Saturday	10/10... Sunday
7am-8am	4		4				
8am-9am	6					6	
9am-10am							
10am-11am				9/10	3		
11am-12am			4				
12am-1pm	4	8/10					
1pm-2pm			4				
2pm-3pm						5	10/10
3pm-4pm							
4pm-5pm							
5pm-6pm	7		6		9/10		
6pm-7pm							
7pm-8pm	8/10		7			8/10	
8pm-9pm							
10pm-11pm							
11pm-12pm							

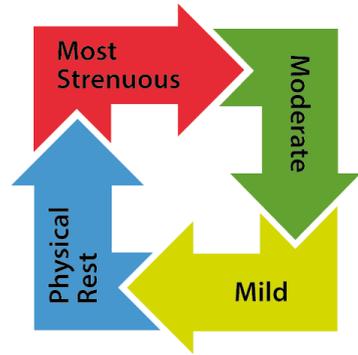
Example

This chart above shows a boom and bust pattern, lots of red activity when pain ok, then exhausted and sore and followed by rest blue (bust), this pattern continues all week.

Pain scores are getting higher, after boom.

- 1. Colour in boxes** based on how strenuous **you** think the task was overall.

**RED** - being the most strenuous of your activities. **Green** - moderate, **Yellow** - mild, **Blue** - Physical Rest.



You may find Showering / cooking may be moderate, gardening or shopping, hovering may be strenuous and dressing may be mild, watching TV (rest) but depends on you and what you think.

- 2. Try scoring your pain out of ten each day and fill into your chart** - 0 no pain, 10 the worst pain.
- 3. Try also scoring your mood or mental state** each hour in the corner of each box as we know that if we are stressed, low in mood etc it can turn the volume up to pain and nervous system. - 0 good mood / happy / minimal stress 10 worse mood / very low/ very stressed.

Fill in your own chart, after filling in the whole week, look back at your chart, what do you notice?

Any pattern? Anything you could adapt or change? Are you doing too much (too much red in one go) or too little (lots of blue), do you have a good balance a mixture of colours spaced well throughout the day? Was there any pattern to your mood or pain scores?

**Bring your chart in next week and you can discuss anything you have noticed.** (see page 26 for example)



## Pacing your activities:

13

Pain Score	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7am-8am							
8am-9am							
9am-10am							
10am-11am							
11am-12am							
12am-1pm							
1pm-2pm							
2pm-3pm							
3pm-4pm							
4pm-5pm							
5pm-6pm							
6pm-7pm							
7pm-8pm							
8pm-9pm							
10pm-11pm							
11pm-12pm							

Colour the the squares in as follows:

 strenuous activity  moderate activity  mild activity  resting

Pain score out of 10 (10 worst)



## Pacing your activities:

13

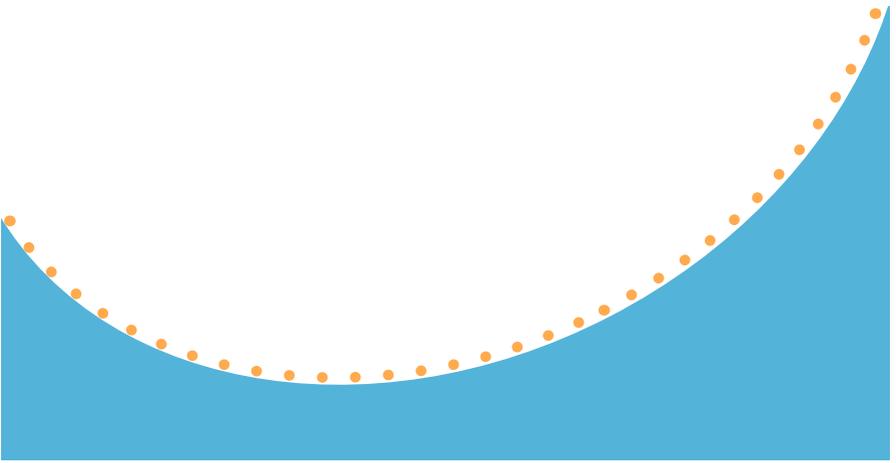
Pain Score	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
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7am-8am							
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3pm-4pm							
4pm-5pm							
5pm-6pm							
6pm-7pm							
7pm-8pm							
8pm-9pm							
10pm-11pm							
11pm-12pm							

Colour the the squares in as follows:

 strenuous activity  moderate activity  mild activity  resting

Pain score out of 10 (10 worst)







<https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/Services/Pages/ChronicPainManagement.aspx>

### Chronic Pain Management - NHS Highland

Persistent Pain has a considerable impact on the quality of life for many people in Scotland. Approximately 800,000 people across Scotland are affected by persistent pain to varying degrees, and it can result in significant suffering for both those directly affected and those close to them.

[www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk)



Issue 1	Date of issue: Dec 20	Date of Review: Dec 23
Devised by Nicola Bailley		



Raigmore Hospital  
Inverness Dec. 2020  
NC20-00220