



Week 4 Session 2 – Activity Management

We often tend to go to extremes of doing activities or not; like the tortoise and the hare.....when we feel better and the pain is less, we run off at a hundred miles an hour, getting all the things we need to get done out of the way; knowing that we will be in pain; however we then suffer later and slow down too much; we allow the pain to control us, and do no activities or exercise to help the pain.

Ask yourself:

What activities do I avoid?

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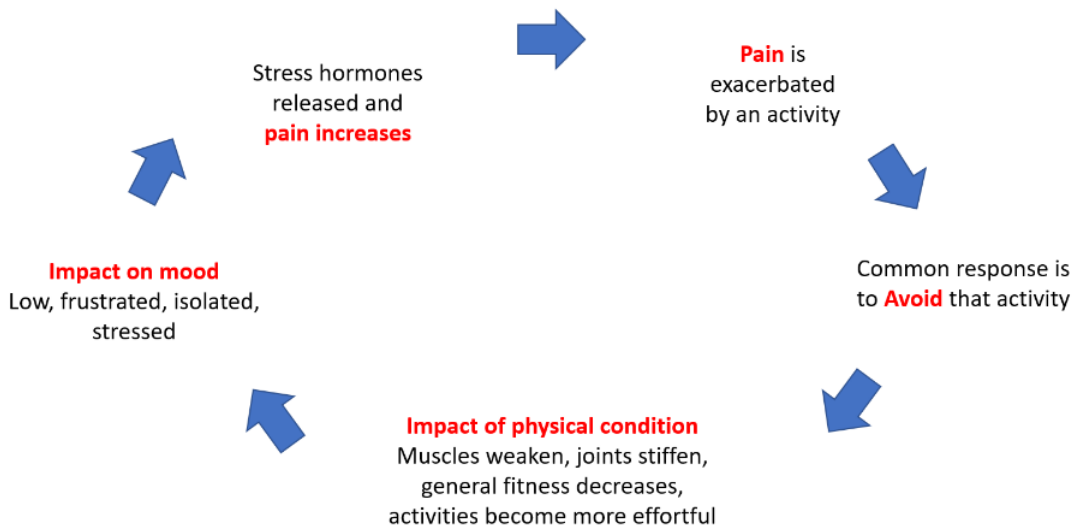
What activities do I overdo/ push through pain?

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Why do I overdo certain activities?

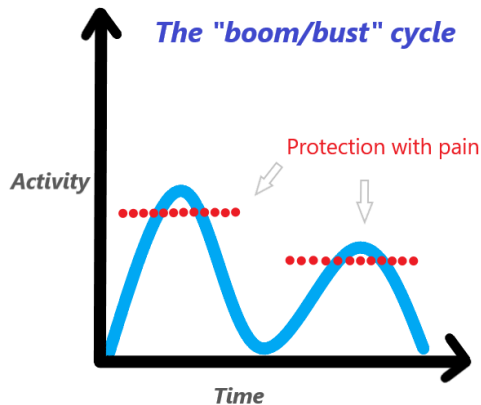
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Viscious cycle of avoidance





Overdoing/ boom and bust cycle



Our nervous system is hard wired to protect us, so when it determines we've done too much it will increase pain to tell us to stop. This doesn't mean we have done damage, but that the nerves have become over protective. They will continue to increase their sensitivity every time we push through pain, and pain can worsen. To avoid this we need to sneak under the radar of pain, stopping before the pain stops us. Baseline setting can be really helpful for this.

HOW TO SET A BASELINE

It is important to work out your tolerance level or time for each activity or exercise in your plan. The tolerance is how much of the activity or exercise you can do without overdoing it.

Using walking as an example:

- Choose the best time of the day for you to walk and select a good place to start e.g. up and down the garden path.
- Walk at your own pace for a sensible period of time that you can manage today. You may have to make an educated guess at this stage, but use your knowledge and experience to work out how much is manageable for you.
- If you know you have a tendency to overdo things at times, then recognise this, deliberately do less of the activity than you would normally.
- Record the amount of time, or distance you have walked.
- Repeat the experience the following day, walking as much as you feel you can manage that day.



- Record the amount of time, or distance you have walked.
- Repeat the experience again on the third day, using the same principles, and record the outcome.
- Average the scores and divide by two to find the baseline (or start point) for walking.

Record Sheet	Activity = Walking
Day one	5 mins
Day two	3 mins
Day three	4 mins
Total	12 mins
Average (divide by 3)	4 mins
Baseline (divide average by 2)	2 mins
Day four	2 mins

Once you have worked out your baseline follow it for at least three days. Then decide how much and how often you would like to progress it.

The baseline is very important. Once you have worked it out it will enable you to start the activity, or exercise, at a level which is manageable for you.

Evaluate

Stick to your baseline each day and make yourself a plan about how to move your baseline up (slowly).

After several days using the plan, look back and decide if changes need to be made. It is often helpful to identify any barriers that prevent you from sticking to your programme; once identified you can start tackling, or overcoming these barriers.

Pacing up Exercise and Activity

There may be various activities which you wish to increase, such as your exercise programme, activities around the house like ironing or gardening, shopping etc. Work out your baseline for each activity you wish to increase. Remember try not to tackle to many things at once.

Daily Target



Set daily targets or goals by which to increase your chosen activities. Do not do more than your target for that day, even if it feels like a good day. This levels out your activity cycling, and helps you begin to plan your activities better.

Re-evaluate at Regular Intervals

Carry out your planned programme for the next week, and at the end of the week look back at the record and set targets for the coming week. As a rule, increase time spent doing activity by a maximum of 20%

Record

Keep a daily record of achievements. This will help you monitor you progress and adjust as necessary.

WORK OUT YOUR BASELINES

Think of an activity you would like to improve, for example, sitting, walking, driving etc., and fill out the table below. Once you have worked out your baseline try to stick to it for a week.

1.	Choose your activity	
	Is it realistic?	
2.	Measure what you can already do	
	Day 1	
	Day 2	
	Day 3	
	Total	
3.	Work out your average (divide the total by 3)	
4.	Work out your baseline (divide the average by 2)	



5.	Stick to your baseline for a week		
	Day	Time spent doing activity	How do I feel?
	1		
	2		
	3		
	4		
	5		
	6		
	7		

6.	Review the activity	
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	What will be my new target?	
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Finding the middle ground between avoiding and overdoing – the 5 Ps (+C)

Prioritisation

Take a close look at all the things you do. Is there anything that you can stop for a while or that is non-essential? It might be a committee you belong to, some voluntary work or other things that you have 'always done'. This is the time to re-evaluate and put yourself higher on the list. Is there a balance between activities or have you had to prioritise work or household tasks to the detriment of doing activities that you value such as leisure pursuits or hobbies.

Planning and Organisation

Can you change the time or the day that you carry out some activities so that:

- a) You spread the load over the week and don't do too much on one day.
- b) Change some things to when other people are around to help, or when it is quieter e.g. shopping.

Are you planning in time to practise relaxation.

How is your sleep routine .Are you establishing a good pattern that will support your activities in the day?

Pacing

Pacing is a key element to managing activity and many people already do it to some extent. It involves breaking tasks down into small manageable chunks, with rests in between and enables you to carry out a task that may otherwise be too much. The chunks can be spaced over as long a time period as you need. An example might be preparing a meal by doing the vegetables in the morning.

Consider the motto "Little and often" in response to any lengthy activity. You will find that you manage to achieve more in the long run.

Recognise your capacity. Consider any method that could help you, for example, using an alarm if you need to.

You could apply the tolerance /baseline approach to help you pace activities.

Problem solving/Adapting



To grade an activity means to change how you do it to reduce its impact on you. Examples may be. Sitting down to do the ironing, or to wash up, using a labour saving device such as a dishwasher. Asking someone to drive you rather than drive yourself.

You may like to attend to your posture or the way you organise a task.

Communication

In order to put in place the above you often have to communicate your needs effectively and explain what you intend to do in order to manage your condition more effectively. e.g. saying no, setting boundaries on your time or even explaining to your loved ones that you are able to do certain tasks.

What activity could you adjust using the 4Ps? What amendments could you make? Start by thinking about one activity that is high demand for you and focus on that, if it goes well, try another activity!

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Consider completing the weekly activity diary overleaf, this can help with noticing patterns of activity, eg. if you tend to do a lot of activity all in one go and then have prolonged periods of rest. Identifying patterns can then help with making changes to daily routines.



My Weekly Activity Planner

Week beginning:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

Use this planner to **record your Activities** (including sedentary or resting activities) over a week. This will help you to identify where you can break up and vary things better.