



Balancing activities – work, rest and play

Reviewing your activities - Range and quality

If you have completed a 'Weekly Activity Diary' take a look at the range and quality of your week's activities.

- Is there a balance between 'Work, Rest & Play', and more importantly –
- do you regularly take time to care for yourself / your health and
- does your week include activities that you find meaningful and enjoyable?



If you have identified with the experiences expressed in the 'Downward Spiral of Chronic Illness' and the 'Vicious Cycle of Inactivity' (see these handouts for more information), your range and quality of activities will have greatly reduced and may largely comprise the mundane, day-to-day activities involved in simply living.

Effect on mood and self-esteem

You will also be aware of the impact this will have on your mood and how you feel about yourself. So much of our identity and sense of satisfaction and self-worth is tied up in what we do, what we enjoy and what we're good at or interested in. When these things are lost or reduced, and without the positive reinforcement of using our skills and abilities, we naturally lose confidence and can feel frustrated, bored and fed up.

Caring for yourself

You may also be someone who has always been in the role of caring for others and even though you are now struggling due to the effects of persistent pain you tend to put yourself, your needs and managing your health lower down or at the bottom of the priority list.

- a sign of this may be the difficulty you have saying 'no' or,
- finding it difficult to resist coming to the aid of others.

During this time of learning about and developing your pain management skills and strategies take time to reflect and consider your priorities.

- if you take regular medication for any long-term condition including pain you and those around you most likely recognise the importance of taking this regularly and consistently.
- **caring for yourself** by making time to regularly do enjoyable, meaningful or productive activities, practising regular relaxation, doing gentle stretches, etc. **is an equally important part of your health management as taking medication or going to medical appointments.**

Balance of activities

Of course the everyday tasks and responsibilities still need doing, but if you have completed a 'Weekly Activity Diary' why not look back over it and consider how much of a **mixture of and balance** there is between the everyday tasks and duties (including work), rest, sleep, leisure and relaxation activities.



If you haven't yet completed a 'Weekly Activity Diary', then why not plan to complete one for at least a week and then review it as above.