

Pacing: Your Activity Planner

A practical tool for balancing activity and rest

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What is pacing?

Pacing is about finding a sustainable balance between activity and rest. Many people with persistent pain fall into a 'boom and bust' pattern — doing too much on good days, then crashing and being unable to do anything for days after.

Pacing helps you break this cycle by doing a little less than you think you can on good days, and a little more than you feel like doing on bad days. Over time, this builds a steady, reliable baseline that you can gradually increase.

The Boom & Bust Pattern

WHAT TO AVOID



Good days: do too much

Bad days: do nothing — then repeat

The Paced Approach

WHAT TO AIM FOR



Consistent daily activity level

Small, gradual increases over time

How to pace: 4 steps

1 Find your baseline

Time how long you can do an activity comfortably on an average day (not a good day). This is your baseline. Start here every time.

2 Plan your day

Divide your day into activity blocks and rest blocks. Use the planner on page 2 to map this out.

3 Take planned breaks

Rest BEFORE pain forces you to stop. Set a timer. Switch between activities to use different muscle groups.

4 Gradually increase

Once your baseline feels comfortable for 1-2 weeks, increase by 10-20%. Never more, even if you feel great.

Remember:

Stop BEFORE the pain makes you stop — this is the golden rule of pacing.

Switch tasks regularly — alternate sitting, standing, and moving activities.

Good days are not for catching up — stick to your plan even when you feel great.

Be kind to yourself — pacing is a skill that takes time to learn. Progress isn't always linear.

Weekly Activity Planner

Use this sheet to plan and track your paced activities

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Step 1: Find your baseline

Time how long you can comfortably do each activity on an average day. Write it below.

Activity	Time before pain increases	My baseline (reduce by 20%)
Walking		
Housework		
Sitting at desk		

Step 2: Plan your day

Alternate activity blocks with rest/switch blocks. Fill in for each day of the week.

Day: _____

Date: _____

Pain (0-10):

AM: _____ PM: _____

Morning 8-9am	9-10am	10-11am	11-12pm
Afternoon 12-1pm	1-2pm	2-3pm	3-4pm
Evening 4-5pm	5-6pm	6-7pm	7-8pm

Step 3: Reflect on your week

What went well this week?

What was challenging?

What will I adjust next week?

My goals for next week

Keep them small, specific, and achievable. Use SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound.

- _____
- _____
- _____