

A frustrating part of living with pain is the way it can interfere with your plans to do things. Pacing means organising your time and efforts so that you can do roughly the same amount of activity from day to day.

Planning

Plan what you need and want to do and when. Think about the order you do activities and whether you can alternate tasks. Writing down a weekly plan can help you to balance out tasks and to focus on your goals. Remember to plan relaxation periods every day.

Prioritise

Prioritising activities means making choices about what to do. Decide which tasks need to be done and what can wait. This means thinking what is a realistic amount of activity and will involve planning and delegation.

Remember, pain is felt less intensely if we are feeling happy and contented in ourselves and are involved in activities that interest us.

Posture

Alternate body position:

Shifting prevents your muscles getting too tired. Changing body positions also changes which supporting muscles and ligaments are doing the work during movement or weight-bearing activities.

Breathe:

Being tense uses energy which means your muscles are tight and working. Learning to relax helps your muscles rest.

Pacing

Alternate Tasks:

Plan to alternate heavier tasks with lighter or less stressful ones. You can be inventive while planning and build in strategies which do not require you to stop, i.e. changing between challenging and easier tasks or ones which require different positions. For example, read or work at the computer, then complete some filing or restock shelves.

Break up a task into achievable parts:

Break activities into small parts or steps.

Take breaks:

Do this according to periods of time and/or amount of activity completed rather than as a response to pain or exhaustion. This moves away from the pattern of using strategies only in reaction to pain allowing a proactive rather than reactive approach – you make the decision to take a break rather than pain deciding on the break.

Micro-pauses:

A short break where you stop, take a few breaths, relax and carry on.