

# ADVICE SHEET

Patient advice from Healthcare RM

## Graded activity

### Moving forward with pain

When you experience pain you naturally cut back on activities, rest more or generally do less. In the short term this can help your body to repair itself. If you continue to be inactive due to the pain, your body starts to get out of condition - joints become stiffer and muscles weaker. Consequently you are less able to cope with activity and your pain comes on sooner/increases when you try to do anything. It can seem like you are getting worse medically when in fact you are just getting worse physically.

### “Make sure the plan progresses in small equal steps”

The good news is there is a way to increase activity. We call this graded activity. Graded activity enables you to gradually increase your ability to do a particular activity or position in a stepwise manner. Sportsmen and women instinctively understand these principles. Following an injury, they rest for a short while. But they are then quick to get back in action and gradually build-up their activities – despite the pain.

### Where do I start?

Pick any activity and work out how much of that activity you can do comfortably. This would be the amount you can do on both a good day and a bad day. For example, if it's a real struggle to walk for 10 minutes, your starting point might be 5-6 minutes.

### Write up a plan for the week ahead

Using the pacing up chart (overleaf) write up an activity plan for your chosen activity, making sure the plan progresses in small, equal steps. We suggest you try to build your activity every day or second day. So with the walking example, you may increase by a minute or two each day

Review the plan at the end of the week and make any necessary changes.

If you have had one bad day- progress the plan at the same rate.

If you have struggled a few days in a row – this would suggest you have been too ambitious and need to slow the rate of progression down in next week's plan.

### “If you feel you could progress quicker, speed the rate of progression up”

## Helping you to build function



### Expect some increased symptoms

Expect some increased symptoms as you increase your activity, this is normal, to be expected and will settle. Your plan should be realistic and will therefore keep any increased symptoms to a minimum.

Remind yourself that you are not harming yourself, your body is already sore and is bound to complain as you ask it to do more.

### “Your plan should be realistic...”

If your activity levels are significantly increasing your symptoms and putting you off being active then you may be overdoing it.

In this case, you should start from a lower level of activity or slow down your rate of progression. Bear in mind that if you overdo things it may not be until later that you feel it.

If you have any new symptoms and are worried then ask about them. (You can use the pacing up chart to make a note of how you have managed with each day).

### “Remind yourself that you are not harming yourself as you increase your activity”

**Contact Details**  
T: 0871 200 5060  
E: [info@healthcare-rm.com](mailto:info@healthcare-rm.com)  
W: [www.healthcare-rm.com](http://www.healthcare-rm.com)

**Opening Times** Monday-Friday  
8.00 am - 6.00 pm