

GOAL SETTING

Having chronic pain often makes you:

- Avoid doing certain things that you think will flare your pain up.
- Choose what or how much you do based on how you feel that day.

Avoidance

When you avoid doing painful things short term, you may think you are 'getting away with it'. However, the longer you delay tackling those painful activities the more difficult it becomes to face them. You may find you are no longer physically able to do activities because you have lost the necessary strength, suppleness and fitness, so once enjoyable tasks are too much effort. This can lead to you feeling negative and result in a loss of confidence

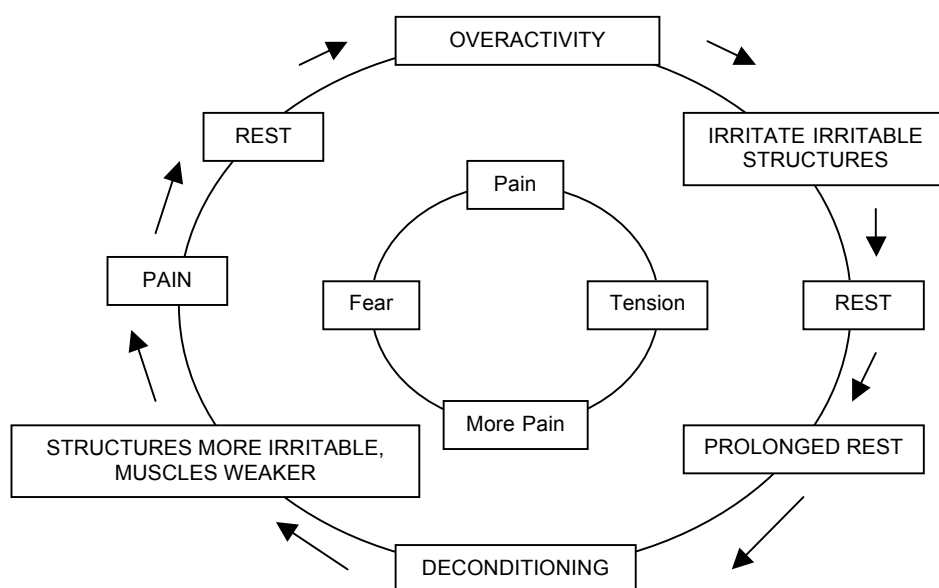
Activity Cycling

Now look at the other side of the coin.

'I feel much better today. I must catch up with everything I intended to do on my bad day when I actually did nothing.'

Result.....you overdo it, flare up your pain, and need to rest until it settles, sometimes for long periods.

So you are trapped by doing too much, or too little. This is called Activity Cycling, and creates a vicious circle.



You can break the cycle by learning to be more in control of your activity levels, not letting them be in control of you.

You can achieve this by goal setting.

GOAL SETTING

This process enables you to be more in control of your activities by planning both what you do, and how much you do at any one time.

Step 1 - Identify your baseline

Step 2 - Repeat your baseline

Step 3 - Increase gradually

The best goals are..... **SMART**

Once you have decided on a goal, break it down into stages, for example:

‘I WANT TO START SWIMMING AGAIN’

Begin slowly, break down your goal into smaller targets

‘I WILL VISIT THE POOL AND SEE WHEN IT OPENS’

‘I WILL ASK WHEN THE QUIET TIMES ARE’

‘I WILL PLAN A NIGHT TO GO, AND SWIM FOR JUST 10 MINS’

Remember, start slowly and build up gradually, if you haven’t done an activity for a while you will not be able to do as much as you did before (to start with). As you achieve goals you can set others to work towards

‘I WILL SWIM ONCE EVERY WEEK FOR 20 MINS’

Just remember to keep breaking down the goals until they are manageable for you. If one or two seem harder to achieve, remember that you are on the right track, and gently keep yourself moving forward.

Overcoming obstacles increases self-esteem and makes you feel good.

Pace your activity; take short rests or vary your tasks.

Too many easy targets mean that you do not move forward, and gain nothing from your plan.

Too many hard targets may mean that you lose motivation.

Expect a few aches, this is normal as you start to increase your activity, or try new things.

Whatever you do you sometimes experience a ‘bad patch’.

The good news is that things will settle and you will be able to pick up from where you left off. It is important to continue to plan during your down period, but choose more appropriate targets.

REMEMBER

- Think carefully about what you want to achieve
- Make sure you are in control
- Keep a positive attitude
- Keep to your plan through the ups and downs
- Pace your activities