

Healthy Spine Service

GETTING YOU BACK ON TRACK

FACT SHEET

Your Back Pain Flare up Action Plan

Points to remember

- Flare ups are common, predictable and manageable
- Plan to “avoid” a flare up
- Don’t panic – if managed well, flare ups usually settle quite quickly
- Cut back your activity, but don’t stop – any activity is better than no activity
- Try and keep rest periods short – less than 30 minutes
- Monitor your improvement through the flare up

Action plan

Recognise a flare up and what might have caused it – what was the trigger, what are the warning signs?

- Is it medical e.g. new minor injury or change in medication?
- Is it physical e.g. a change in the weather?
- Is it emotional e.g. stress?
- Is it as a result of not managing your pacing e.g. engaged in an activity for too long?



Actions that will help manage your flare up

- Take analgesia as prescribed and make yourself comfortable, apply a heat or cold pack.
- Practice deep breathing and relaxation techniques e.g. meditation, visualisation techniques.
- Stay active – gentle physical activity often improves pain.
- Stay positive – don’t get caught up in negative thoughts.
- Distract yourself – focus on something else, watch a movie or listen to music you enjoy.
- Talk to someone – family, friend, support network, healthcare professional.
- Exercise and pacing – continue to use pacing when you do any activity. You may need to change your pacing goals when you experience a flare up.
- Keep a pain diary while experiencing a flare up – this may help you and your health care professional find out what makes your pain better or worse (an example is on the next page).

My plan for managing a flare up

If I have a pain flare up, I will do this for the next few hours:
E.g. practice my relaxation and breathing

If I have a pain flare up, I will do this for the next few days:
E.g. cut back my activity but do not stop and keep a pain diary

Back on track plan:
E.g. commence a walking program for 15 minutes twice a day – remembering to implement my pacing skills

Pain diary

0	1 2 3 4	5 6 7	8 9	10
No pain	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Worst pain imaginable

Date, time:	
Pain rating on scale:	
Pain medication taken and dose:	
Any side effects from medication taken:	
What made the pain better today?	
What made the pain worse today?	

For more Information:

Adelaide Spine Clinic
<http://www.spine.com.au/fact-sheets/>

You tube: Mike Evans Low Back Pain
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOjTegn9RuY>

Contacts

In an emergency, always contact 000 for immediate assistance

If it's not an emergency but you have any concerns, contact **13Health (13 43 2584)**. Qualified staff will give you advice on who to talk to and how quickly you should do it.

All information contained in this sheet has been supplied by qualified professionals as a guideline for care only. Seek medical advice, as appropriate, for concerns regarding your health.

Notes

Horizontal lines for taking notes.