

FLARE UP PLAN

Points to remember

- Flare-ups are challenging, but you will manage
- Have a flare-up plan- BEFORE the next one
- Don't panic- If managed well, flare-ups usually settle quite quickly
- Cut back activity, but don't stop- some activity is better than no activity
- Try and keep rest periods short – less than 30 minutes
- Remind yourself – you can get through this
- Let someone know about your plan
- Review your flare-up plan afterwards and amend as needed

The nature of chronic pain means there will be fluctuations in pain and times this flare up a lot. It is important that you remember that this is not your fault and your body has most likely not been harmed.

During flare ups it is easy to think that rest and waiting is the best to do. Unfortunately if this goes on for several hours or even days, those periods of rest and waiting can worsen your chronic pain over time.

It is therefore important to have some activities and things that take your focus away from your pain, at least some of the time. This will take some extra effort, and therefore making a plan on what this might look like and having it written down will help you try out something different.

Any flare up of pain will heighten your stress and threat responses. It is hard in these time to communicate effectively and to remember things. Making a plan when your pain levels are manageable, can help you cope and stay in control, even during the particularly challenging times of a flare up.

A plan of WHAT TO DO if a flare-up happens

Use the next page to write down what you want to try and do at your next flare up. You do not need to fill each field. Be as specific as possible.

Have a conversation with those around you and let them know if and how they might be able to help you through a flare up.

My Flare up plan

| Consider the following: | Examples: : | I will | I found this helpful |
|--|--|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Self-talk: | "I'm sore but safe" "I can do this" "This will pass" | | |
| Cognitive diffusion | Unhook from unhelpful thoughts and feelings Make room for a range of possibilities | | |
| Mindfulness | Body scan Listen with your full attention to some music. | | |
| Breathing/Relaxation/Meditation: | Breathe out Box breathing Safe place imagery | | |
| Family, Friends, Flat mates: | Text a friend Put a sign on the door | | |
| Movements: | Move a part that is not sore Cat/cow | | |
| Distraction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensory • Mental | Listen to a fun podcast Run hands under cold water Do a puzzle Hum, sing Watch something | | |
| Medications, heat or ice packs, TENS: | Get wheat bag or TENS machine | | |
| Commit to | Going for a short walk Checking in at work, even if not staying for the whole day Getting in touch with one friend | | |
| Reward once it is settled | Get a bunch of flowers Go for a walk with a friend | | |