

# PACING

**Definition:** Pacing involves doing daily tasks in smaller chunks of work or time by planning and measuring what you do. The aim of pacing is to do your daily activities without pain flares. In the medium to long-term, pacing helps to rewire or train your brain to respond to your pain in a calmer way. It is common when pacing, that you may feel frustrated with stopping your activity!

## What is a Pain Flare?



A pain flare refers to the increase in pain you feel after stopping an activity. A pain flare lasts for up to 2 hours. It is normal to have some increases in pain after an activity, however if pain persists for longer than 20-30 minutes, it is considered a pain flare. If you experience a pain flare, you need to reduce your activity by 20%.



If you are in pain for days, this is not a pain flare and is an indication to reduce your activity to 50%. Behaviours that may activate this type of pain reaction include lawn mowing, vacuuming the house, or cleaning the bathroom.

## There are 3 steps to pacing:

### 1. Create a Baseline:

Think of an activity and choose a way to measure it. Measuring your activity is the key to pacing. If you are not measuring, you are not pacing! To measure an activity, you could use:

- Time (e.g., 10 minutes or 30 seconds)
- Distance (e.g., 20 steps or 200 meters)
- Counting (e.g., 5 lifts)
- Any other measure you find useful.



Now, find a baseline measure that won't cause a pain flare (e.g., 10 steps to the end of the room and back, 50 steps to the letterbox). Everyone's baseline is different! Write down your activity, measure and baseline below.

Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Measure: \_\_\_\_\_

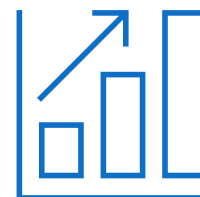
Baseline: \_\_\_\_\_

**Tip:** Use a watch or stopwatch on your phone to measure time or a hand tally counter to measure counting.

**Tip:** If an activity causes a pain flare, reduce the activity by 20%. Multiplying your baseline by 0.8 will reduce it by 20% (e.g.,  $10 \times 0.8 = 8$  mins).

## 2. Gradually Increase Activity:

After one week of successful activity at your baseline, without pain flares, it's time to gradually increase your activity. To calculate your new baseline, multiply your current baseline by 1.1 to increase by 10% (e.g., 10 x 1.1 = 11 mins).



New Baseline: \_\_\_\_\_

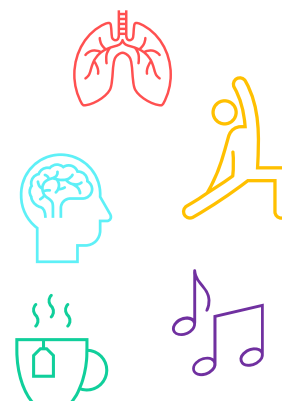
**Chunking:** Break activities into bite-sized chunks to reduce pain flares. Complete a chunk of the activity 2-3 times a day.

**Warning!** Overdoing it will set you back. Prioritise paced activities to rewire your pain.

## 3. Plan breaks in-between activities

**Breaks** help you achieve your goals. What can you do in-between activity times? Plan your breaks with activities that you can do in-between pacing tasks to relax your mind and body. Here are some suggestions below:

- Deep breathing – 4-4-4-4 (breathe in for 4 seconds, hold 4 seconds, breathe out 4 seconds, wait 4 seconds).
- Stretches – make sure to use deep breathing while doing your stretches.
- Practice mindfulness – see our Mindfulness worksheet for more info.
- Calming activities – journaling, listening to music, sit outside in the fresh air, drawing, tea break.



List some break activities you could use below:

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
-

# PACING TRACKER

- Add your baseline and measurement unit for each activity in the table below.
- Use the calculations above to gradually increase your baseline.
- Find a break activity
- Keep track of your daily activity in the completion column.

Activity	Baseline	Measurement	Break	Daily completion
e.g., Walking	10 steps	Distance	Stretches	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> T F S S
				M T W T F S S
				M T W T F S S
				M T W T F S S
				M T W T F S S
				M T W T F S S
				M T W T F S S
				M T W T F S S
				M T W T F S S
				M T W T F S S
				M T W T F S S
				M T W T F S S
				M T W T F S S
				M T W T F S S
				M T W T F S S