

Therapy Services

Set Backs

What is a set-back?

This is anything that could get in the way of managing your pain. Set-backs can disrupt your normal daily activities or routine. This can last from a few days up to several weeks. There can be lots of reasons for this such as:

- Increase in pain (or 'flare up')
- Being unwell
- Change in mood
- Being busier than normal
- Stressful life events

Set-backs are common when dealing with long-term health conditions or persistent pain. We find people can improve how they manage these difficult times using some of the tips in this leaflet. We encourage people to write out their own 'Set-back plan' with what they find helpful to do during flare up. If you have any questions please speak to your therapist.

How can set-backs affect people?

These are some common signs people notice:

- Increase in pain
- Increase in fatigue
- Not sleeping well
- Reduced or increased appetite
- Feeling more tense
- Feeling irritable or tearful
- Harder to do normal activities

How can I manage set-backs?

Everyone manages set-backs differently but these are some things to consider:

- Remember flare ups are common and not necessarily a sign of new damage
- Keep going with your exercises but reduce the number of exercises or pick the ones easiest for you
- Use pain medication, ice or heat regularly
- Ask for help from those around you
- Prioritise what needs doing

- ▶ Plan out when you can do activities including breaks
- ▶ Pace any tasks that must be done
- ▶ Work out what is manageable
- ▶ Gradually build up your exercises and activities back up
- ▶ Build in enjoyable activities
- ▶ Factor in more time for relaxation
- ▶ Remember to keep to bedtime routine to help sleep
- ▶ Use short periods of rest
- ▶ Change position frequently
- ▶ Use assertiveness to say 'no'
- ▶ Talk to someone
- ▶ Notice any negative thought spirals
- ▶ Notice how far you've come and that a set-back isn't being back to square one
- ▶ Be kind to yourself, especially whilst things are difficult

How can I get back on track after a set-back?

Here are some suggestions:

- ▶ Work out your new baseline and gradually build back up
- ▶ Look at your short-term and long-term goals and change where necessary
- ▶ Make it fun. Try doing your exercises or housework to music
- ▶ Try exercising with friends or in a group
- ▶ Keep pacing your activity
- ▶ Reward yourself by doing something you enjoy
- ▶ Build your exercises into daily activities
- ▶ Remember your achievements and what you have learnt already
- ▶ Gradually reduce rest periods if these increased during your set-back
- ▶ Change your set-back plan as needed with what was helpful

Please see <http://my.livewellwithpain.co.uk/> for more information.