

## ACTIVITY PACING DIARY

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Dates From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

Activity pacing prevents pain levels from rising while increasing the time that you spend on everyday occupations such as housework, gardening, hobbies, socialising, sexual activity, working, exercising, caring for and playing with children and driving.

There are three steps to pacing. The first is to make a careful estimate of how long you can keep going with a sitting, standing, walking or lying down activity before your pain levels increases noticeably. For example, you may find from your first diary that you can sit for about an hour before pain levels increase from a 2 to a 3. Or you may only be able to mow the lawn for 15 minutes before pain levels change. This length of time is referred to as your tolerance for a particular position or activity.

The second step is to train yourself to **initially stop at a half way point before you reach your tolerance** and switch to another, usually lighter, activity before recommencing the task. This always involves changing positions. As well you can use any of the physical or mental strategies that you have learned to reduce strain or distress. For example, a sitting tolerance of 1 hour will mean initially stopping and using different muscle groups at 30 minutes. Then you switch to a completely different activity for say half an hour or more before starting again.

The third step is to gradually increase your activity periods by small amounts while taking shorter breaks. A 10% increase in activity time each week is a rough guide. The benefits of physical exercise also helps raise activity levels. The golden rule is never allow pain intensity to rise above tolerance level. **Listen to your body! Don't wait for your pain to get worse before trying to do something about it.**

Pushing past tolerances (as opposed to gradually extending them) **always** leads to higher levels of pain. People who prior to their pain problem were very active find it hard to accept this fact. They ignore it or hope that "just this once I'll beat it!" Or they adopt an impulsive "I don't care" attitude born of mounting frustration. They not only pay for it with needless pain but also by being laid up, sometimes for days. At the very least they are less active or efficient. They can become trapped in a frustrating, demoralising and physically-disabling cycle.

The pay-off for activity pacing is that you get more done with less pain. The proof lies in changes to later versus earlier tallies of a weeks' recording.

The purpose of this diary is to record your efforts and success at the second step of pacing. Review and apply the technique described above. Results will be discussed with you. Leave the third step - raising activity levels from 50% of tolerances - for the next stage.

Clinician: Attach to actdiary.xls

### Directions

It is important that you keep this diary for 7 days. Fill out one diary page per day.

Please indicate the major activity that you were doing for each hour whether you felt pain or not. Use one of the three position headings (sitting, walking/standing or lying down) to write what you were doing. Also record your average pain level for the hour using the 0-5 scale below. If you took any medication please record what you took and how much. Fill out a little bit of the form several times a day. Do not rely on your memory to fill out the whole page in the evening.

### Pain Scale:

- 0 no pain
- 1 very low level; aware of it only at times
- 2 pain level can be ignored at times; does not interfere with everyday activity
- 3 painful; makes concentration difficult but can continue activity
- 4 severe; interferes with all tasks except taking care of basic needs (eating, toileting)
- 5 intense; incapacitating; rest or bedrest required

