

FLARE-UPS

Most people who experience chronic pain have good days and bad days. Sometimes the pain can get much worse, very quickly and without warning - this is called a flare-up. Flare-Ups are a normal part of chronic pain, and do not mean that your medication has stopped working. It is important to remember that a flare up will always settle down

QUICK FACTS ABOUT FLARE-UPS

- Flare-Ups are a normal part of the chronic pain condition
- They always settle down
- Continue to take your medication
- Don't stop doing normal activities or exercising during a Flare-Up
- Take short, frequent breaks
- Bed rest slows down recovery from a flare-up
- Stress and worry can make pain worse

TRIGGERS

Sometimes it is possible to find a trigger for your flare-ups. Common triggers include over-activity, stress, or sitting too long. If there is a clear pattern, it can be easier to avoid the same circumstances in the future. Try keeping a diary of your activity and score your pain daily to see if a pattern arises

MANAGING FLARE-UPS

Some flare-ups can't be avoided. Having a clear plan can help make managing these flare-ups much easier, and potentially shorten and decrease the frequency of flare-ups.

Everyone will manage their flare-ups differently, and while they will always settle down, remember inactivity or bed rest have been shown to prolong a flare-up. Try to continue normal everyday activities and don't avoid exercise, but do take short, frequent breaks

It may be useful to have a flare-up routine, to make managing a flare-up easier and less stressful. Try to put this plan into action at the first sign of a flare-up. Everyone's routine will be different, but consider including the following:

MEDICATION – Take your medication regularly. If you have a medication plan for a flare-up, follow this

ACTIVITY LEVELS – Rest for short periods only, and try not to cut down on normal daily activities

EXERCISE – A Flare-Up should not stop you from exercising. Try taking regular breaks and decrease the number of repetitions

RELAX AND DESTRESS – Stress and worry can make pain worse. Relaxation techniques such as meditation, mindfulness, and focusing on your breathing can help

THOUGHTS – Pain can trigger unhelpful thoughts. Learning to recognise these can help you to improve your mood and approach to your pain

ASK FOR HELP - It may be useful to note down phone numbers of people who can help make life a bit easier during your Flare-Up

OTHER PAIN REDUCTION STRATEGIES - Use other methods of managing pain if they help you. These can include hot/cold packs, massage, TENS machines