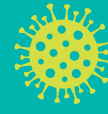


How to use pacing with your physiotherapist



World
PT Day
2021



Pacing is a self-management strategy during activity to avoid post-exertional symptom exacerbation (PESE). When pacing you do less activity than you have energy for, keeping activities short, and resting often.

1

Learn about your energy reserve/reservoir

- Your energy reserve is how much energy you have each day – this will vary so it is best to find your baseline by using an activity and symptom diary. Your “baseline” is what you can do fairly easily on a good day and only just do on a bad day.
- You should always aim to leave some energy at the end of the exercise – don’t keep going until you feel tired.



2

Learn how much energy you have

Your activity and symptom diary should start to show some patterns. You can now reduce or modify your activity levels so that you don’t trigger PESE or “crash”. This will help you find a level of activity you can maintain on both good and bad days, unless you have a relapse. Learn to recognise early signs of PESE and immediately initiate stop, rest, pace to avoid a crash.



3

Learn how to use the 4 Ps to help you plan your activities

- **Prioritise** what you really need to do in a day or week. Question whether all activities are necessary. Can someone else do it? Can I change the activity so it is easier for me?
- **Plan** in your main prioritised tasks for the day. Plan in your rest time so the day is paced.
- **Pacing** – break up your activity into smaller, more manageable tasks with rest breaks.
- **Pleasure** – spend some energy on things you enjoy to help improve your quality of life.



4

Learn how to save energy

- Learn to say no.
- Avoid the temptation to “do just a little more”.
- Modify your activities to use less energy.
- Take short cuts and ask for help.



5

Learn to rest between activities

- Rest means absolutely minimal activity and little or no mental stimulation.
- During rests avoid activities that can be stimulating, such as TV and social media.
- Try some meditation and/or breathing exercises instead.



Can I ever do more?

- When your symptoms improve you will experience less weakness and fatigue. Work with your physiotherapist to find out how to increase your activity levels very gradually, such as carrying out some core strengthening exercise or increasing the amount you can walk by 10%.
- Be realistic and stay flexible – try to create a weekly routine, but accept that some days you will need more rest than others and avoid your triggers.
- Focus on your accomplishments instead of symptoms or what you have not achieved.

Heart rate monitoring

Your physiotherapist can teach you how to take your heart rate. Then, take your heart rate every morning before getting out of bed. Keeping your heart rate within 15 beats per minute of your weekly average should reduce the risk of PESE.



Activity management or pacing is likely to be a safe and effective intervention for managing fatigue and post-exertional symptom exacerbation (PESE). Heart rate monitoring is likely to be a safe and effective intervention for managing fatigue and PESE.

Graded exercise therapy should not be used, particularly when post-exertional symptom exacerbation is present.



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