

Staying active with persistent pain

Keep moving towards what matters—with a plan that can flex with you.

Pain is real, but pain intensity does not always show how much tissue damage is present. A small, repeatable amount of activity can help you maintain function and build confidence over time.



01 START SMALL

Choose a daily activity that matters to you. Find an amount you can repeat on an average day, then split it into shorter sessions if needed.



02 PACE YOURSELF

Plan a realistic time, distance or number of repetitions. Take breaks before you are exhausted. Avoid doing much more on a good day and losing several days afterwards.



03 BUILD IN STEPS

When your current amount feels manageable and recovery is okay, increase one thing at a time—such as duration, frequency or resistance. There is no fixed timetable for everyone.



04 NOTICE THE PATTERN

Check how you feel during activity, later that day and the next day. A brief increase can happen. If symptoms keep rising or stay much worse, make the next session easier.



IF PAIN FLARES

Pause and check for new or unusual symptoms. Temporarily shorten or modify activity, keep comfortable movement where possible, then return in steps as symptoms settle. A flare does not always mean new damage. If it is severe, different, prolonged or increasingly limiting, seek clinical advice.



GET HELP: Seek urgent care for new progressive weakness, loss of bladder or bowel control, numbness around the groin, or severe pain after major injury. Call 000 for possible emergency symptoms. If activity causes delayed, prolonged symptom worsening (for example, with ME/CFS or some post-viral conditions), ask your clinician for condition-specific advice before increasing exercise.

A QUICK CHECK-IN

What activity did I try? _____ What did I notice later or the next day? _____

A physiotherapist can help you find a safe, realistic starting point and build around your goals.

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General information only. It does not replace individual assessment or medical advice.