

ENERGY PATTERNS

UNDERACTIVITY



“Total rest” or “waiting to feel better”

Avoiding activity leads to more difficulties over time

OVERACTIVITY



“Boom and bust”, “pushing through” or “No pain no gain”

Doing too much leads to more difficulties over time

ENERGY OPTIMIZATION



Balancing activity and rest

Challenge yourself a little, then rest a little and repeat

THE 5 P'S OF ENERGY OPTIMIZATION

1 PACING

Pacing is a learned skill that helps you establish the middle ground between over-resting and over-exerting yourself. Pacing makes it easier for you to do the things you need and want to do within the limits of your present abilities and activity level.

Activities can often be modified in terms of duration, frequency, or intensity:

Duration = How long you do it for (e.g., walking for 20 minutes versus 60 minutes)

Frequency = How often you do it (e.g., walking once per day versus twice per day)

Intensity = How much exertion it requires (e.g., walking slow versus walking fast)

Practical Tips for Pacing:

Place time limits on activities – use an alarm or timer.

Break large tasks into small, manageable parts. Grade activities so that they are easier or require less energy.

Take a break **BEFORE** the onset of fatigue or pain. Avoid fully depleting your “battery”.

Create an activity log and record what went well and what did not go well – this can help you understand patterns and how much activity is too much activity for YOU.

Do more gradually over time.

2 PRIORITIZING & PLANNING

Write out all the activities you need to do and estimate how much energy they will take. Consider how much energy you have “in your tank” and plan activities accordingly.

Alternate tasks that you find difficult with tasks that you find easier and use a planner to help keep you on track (e.g., don't try to clean the entire house in one day. Pair a heavier/harder task with easier ones.)

Follow a work/break cycle – schedule your breaks!

3 PRODUCTIVE REST

What will periods of rest look like for you? Did you know rest doesn't have to mean sleeping or “doing nothing”? Restful activities can look different for everyone based on interests and activity tolerance. Some ideas for productive rest could include:

Mindfulness practice

Listening to music / radio / podcast

Gentle movement / stretching / walking

Meaningful activity / something that engages you

Taking a shower / bath

Journaling

4 POSITIONING

Posture, ergonomics and body mechanics, while performing activities, impact strain and fatigue. Consider whether to perform an activity while standing or sitting and for how long you will be sustaining a position for. Consider modifying your body position and switching things up, as able.

5 PERSISTENCE

Consistent use of these principles will help you form energy-sustaining habits requiring less thought over time. Setbacks are normal; so, have a pro-active plan to address these setbacks to help you get back on track with using these skills. Keeping a positive attitude is key!

