

Now that you have some understanding of why things still hurt, you'll hopefully be feeling more positive about controlling your pain. Whilst this is fantastic, you also need to plan for the future.

It is normal to have periods where you might become more sensitive. There are a wide range of things that can lead to flare ups and sometimes it's hard to put your finger on anything particular.



Remember... Living with persistent pain can be like a rollercoaster ride. Good, long-term planning will make it less bumpy!



Less like this...

& more like this!

Remember, what you do **will** make a difference to:

- How **often** you have a flare-up.
- How **long** it lasts.
- How **severe** it is at the time.

Always try to prevent a flare-up whenever possible by:

- **Planning** and **pacing** your activities
- **Controlling** stress by doing regular relaxation.
- **Exercising** and keeping active

Remember:
An increase in pain is rarely a sign of damage.
You're sore but you're safe!

Preparation for a flare-up is like having a first-aid box and first-aid training.

You should have all the equipment that you find helpful readily available (relaxation tapes, extra medication, heat pads etc.). Some people like to actually put all this in a small box for when it is needed. It means you don't have to suddenly remember and prepare everything when you are feeling more sensitive.

The following list will help:

- Increase the number of rests (rather than length)
- Increase the number of relaxation sessions
- **Remember** – tension makes things more sensitive
- Set yourself some **simple goals** (short walks etc.)
- Resume gentle exercises (**start easy, build slowly**)
- **To it, not through it!**
- Use whatever helps you (heat, ice, pain control)
- Gentle exercise – starting with parts of your body that move well
- Stop activities that aggravate or cause tension for a short while
- **Movement is medicine – Motion is lotion!**
- Wear comfortable clothes (easy to put on)
- **Medication** (small doses at regular intervals)
- Medication is more effective if taken at **the start** of a flare-up
- Rest – but only for as long as you need to (no more than a day or two)
- **Stay positive.** When you're low you hurt more easily
- Gradually build yourself back up again as soon as possible
- Keep the engine running & gradually **move up through the gears with confidence!**

Once the flare-up is over, **review** your plan and change things if they didn't work. **Remember:** Nothing changes if nothing changes!

Finally...

Boats are most safe when they are in port...



...but that's not what they are designed for.

“A smooth sea never made a skillful sailor.” C.S. Lewis