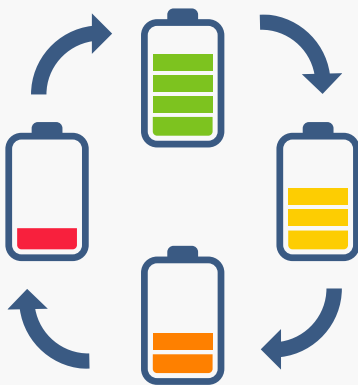


PACING 101: FINDING A SUSTAINABLE RHYTHM



Living with chronic pain can make it hard to navigate the things you **need** and **want to do** alongside changes in pain, energy, and other symptoms.

Pacing is a way to balance activity and rest. Instead of pushing until pain or fatigue force you to stop, pacing helps you plan ahead, take breaks early, and spread activities throughout your day or week.



Break the Push-Crash Cycle

When you're having a better day, it can be tempting to try to catch up on everything at once. But doing too much may lead to more pain, fatigue, or recovery time.

Feel better → Do too much → Symptoms increase →
Need more rest → Repeat

Pacing isn't about quitting or giving up. It is about finding a rhythm that helps you keep doing what matters to you.

Pacing May Help You:

- Have fewer or less intense flare-ups
- Better manage daily activities
- Avoid the "push-crash-recover" cycle
- Save energy for what matters to you
- Feel less physically and mentally worn out

The key is to pace BEFORE you feel like you have to stop. Planned breaks can help you avoid completely draining your battery.

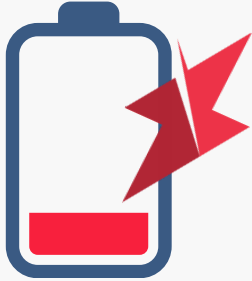
Try These Pacing Strategies

- Break larger tasks into smaller, more manageable steps
- Spread demanding activities throughout the day or week
- Take breaks before pain or fatigue force you to stop
- Switch between harder and easier tasks
- Begin at a pace you can maintain over time
- Build in recovery time around more demanding activities
- Adjust or shorten plans when your energy or symptoms change

Know Your Pacing Zones

Use these zones to help you decide when to **keep going**, **slow down**, or **stop and recover**.

The goal is to use pacing before you reach the Red Zone.



RED: STOP & RECOVER

You have reached or exceeded your current limit.

Pain or other symptoms may have increased significantly.

You may feel very tired, overwhelmed, or unable to focus or continue comfortably.

Try: Stop the activity, rest, use recovery strategies that work for you, and ask for help if needed.



YELLOW: SLOW DOWN

You are noticing early signs that it is time to adjust.

You may begin experiencing more pain, stiffness, fatigue, stress, or trouble focusing, but the activity still feels manageable with changes.

Try: Slow down, pause, take a short break, change positions, or switch to an easier activity.



GREEN: KEEP GOING

What you are doing feels manageable.

Your symptoms and energy feel steady enough to continue—without pushing too hard.

Try: Keep a comfortable pace, take planned breaks—even if you still feel good—and check in with yourself.

REMEMBER:

- **Pace before you have to stop.** Take breaks before pain or fatigue become overwhelming.
- **Every day may be different.** What works one day may not work the next.
- **Pacing takes practice.** Notice what depletes you and what helps you recover.
- **Make room for what matters to you.** Save energy for enjoyable and meaningful activities, too.
- **There is no perfect way to pace.** Find a rhythm that works for you and your life.

Pacing is one tool that may help you live well with chronic pain. It can help you manage your energy, adjust activities, and make room for what matters most.