
Back Pain Management Programme

Flare up versus set back management

Management

From experience, a common reaction to this situation is to panic and feel very despondent. Don't panic and try to remain positive.

Flare up definition

- Lasts less than two days
- Fairly common
- Often due to unusual activity or over activity

Set back definition

- Lasts more than two days
- Uncommon
- Often due to events outside of your control

Flare up management

- Carry on with normal activities, although you may need to adapt these and cut back slightly
- Focus more on pacing
- Spend time doing things you enjoy to try and distract yourself away from the pain
- Continue your exercises
- Continue with your stretching exercises
- Continue with your relaxation techniques

Set back management

- Cut back on normal activities until you are no longer increasing your pain
- Remember you should not increase your pain level to more than two out of ten if your pain is below five out of ten, or more than one out of ten if your pain is above five out of ten.
- This may mean resting for a maximum of two to three days
- You may wish to discuss with your doctor or pharmacist about increasing your medication. This can be planned in advance.
- Continue with your stretching exercises
- Continue with your relaxation techniques.
- You may need to apply heat or ice. Refer to the 'management of soft tissue injuries' handout.
- Spend time doing things you enjoy to try and distract yourself away from the pain
- Gradually build up activities

- For both flare up management and set back management, make a plan of your recovery, be flexible and remember to pace.
- Spend more time doing relaxation and stretches and use heat or ice.
- Try to remain positive, do not feel guilty or blame yourself.