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Help to get yourself moving...

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HOW THIS RESOURCE CAN HELP YOU

Thank you for opening this booklet. We understand that when you live with persistent pain, arthritis and/or other health problems for a long time, it can be really hard to become more physically active, but we want to help you get started.

The trouble is, when we don't move much, our muscles and the other parts of our body that support our joints get weaker, lose condition and then our joints can't function properly. This can lead to more pain, make us want to move even less and leave us struggling to do the basic tasks of looking after ourselves and maintaining our independence.

Has your doctor been telling you that you should do more physical activity? Have you thought to yourself: 'it's easy for them to say, they don't know how much pain I experience'? Many people tell us that they don't want to move because they fear they will do more damage to themselves. For most of us, if we haven't been active for a long time, it can be really difficult to know what to do, how to safely start moving more and who we can trust to help us.

This booklet contains information, tips and practical strategies to help you gain the confidence to start safely on a path to moving more. It also highlights who else might be able to help support you and how you can connect with them.

The content has been developed by a team of health professionals and importantly, people who have been 'in the same boat' as you are now. They have learned ways to move more and, in doing so, have been able to take control of their pain rather than their pain controlling them.

We encourage you to read on... what have you got to lose? We think you will be amazed by how making just small changes to move more can help improve your health and well-being.

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INTRODUCTION

One in four Tasmanians lives with arthritis or other conditions affecting their skeleton, muscles and joints. We also know that, for at least twenty percent of our population, arthritis isn't the only medical condition they are affected by. As humans we are designed to move, and there is now a large body of evidence supporting the fact that moving more in a safe way can help us gain more mobility, experience less pain and manage other health conditions.

This booklet is yours to keep and use as a reference guide. You will see that it contains space for you to jot down notes and ideas if you want to.

Having problems with our health doesn't mean we can't be physically active in some way. But remember that 'Rome wasn't built in a day' so please take it slowly. Taking small steps towards moving more will help keep you motivated and on track toward being able to do more with less pain. If you haven't been physically active for a while now or have concerns about getting started, it is always a good idea to talk with your doctor or health professional first.

'Movement plays a key role in helping us heal from chronic pain; however, it is one of the first habits we neglect when pain begins. This robs our bodies of both strength and endorphins, those magical substances which relieve pain and promote happiness. Finding motivation can make all the difference.' Dr Johnathan Kuttner.



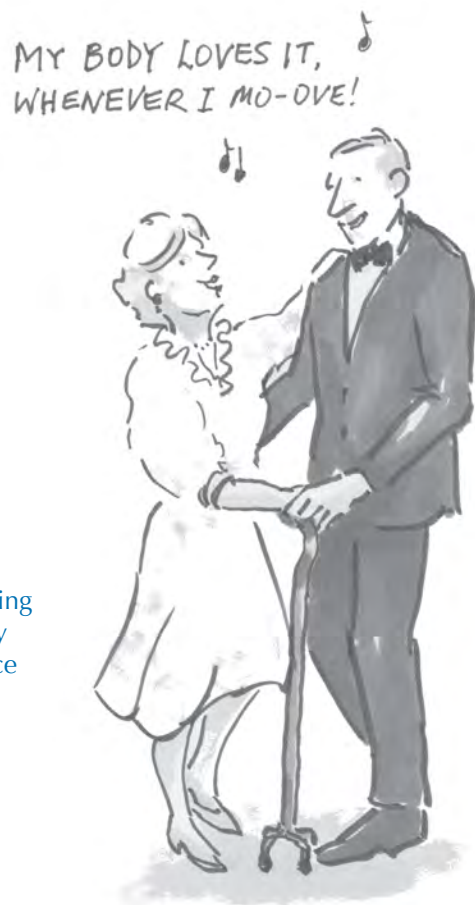
Moving more really can make us feel better

- Improves our mood
- Stimulates production of 'feel good' chemicals in our brain
- Improves our memory and how clearly we think
- Helps us relax and feel happier
- Increases blood flow to our brain
- Makes our mind work faster

- Strengthens muscles
- Strengthens bones
- Improves flexibility
- Reduces stiffness
- Lubricates joints
- Improves posture
- Improves balance
- Improves fitness
- Improves heart and lung function

- Helps us lose weight
- Helps maintain a healthy weight
- Improves general health
- Helps reduce pain
- Helps fight off illness
- Helps us sleep better
- Improves energy levels
- Improves mental health and wellbeing
- Decreases inflammation in the body
- Helps us maintain our independence

- Reduces the risk of:
 - Falling
 - Breaking hip/other bones
 - Needing joints replaced
 - Dementia and depression
 - Type 2 diabetes
 - Breast/colon cancer
 - Heart and lung disease



AM I READY TO MAKE CHANGES?

Have you previously had good intentions to be more active, starting out with great enthusiasm only to come to a halt at the first barrier? Don't be hard on yourself, we can all relate to this.

Dealing with chronic health problems can make becoming more active challenging, but for many of us, the fear of pain and doing more damage becomes a major barrier. We may try things once, decide they don't work and that nothing ever will. Perhaps we lack the confidence to take the first step, we lose our motivation, we get discouraged and give up, or maybe we just haven't found the right people to support us. We've all been there at some stage but these barriers can be addressed.

Language is important. Think about how many times you say to yourself or others 'I can't do that'. Every time we do, the message gets reinforced. It becomes our belief that 'I really can't do that'. It becomes an unhelpful habit. We are creatures of habit. Despite our best intentions, many of us find it difficult to break the cycle we are in, to start to move more. It takes courage to start and time before changes become new habits. You may face some hurdles along the way... this is normal.

A good place to start is to honestly recognise and challenge your own thoughts. What is stopping me from starting to move more? What are the things I see as roadblocks or barriers? Can I challenge the way I think about these roadblocks and come up with some possible solutions?



Roadblocks and ways to overcome them

Here are some common roadblocks other people have told us about and possible solutions to consider.

Think about your 'roadblocks' (barriers you may face) and solutions to overcome them as you begin to change your habits and make your plan.

ROADBLOCKS	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
I'm worried about damaging my joints. I'm scared I will make my pain worse.	Sure, I'm worried but I can ask my doctor or health educator if I will damage my joints by using them. I can be safe, starting gently to help manage my pain and improve my strength and self-confidence.
I'm too stiff and don't feel safe. I'm too unsteady.	Making movement a regular part of my day will improve my balance and strength and reduce my stiffness and risk of falling.
I don't know how to start; it's been a long time since I did any physical activity.	I will try the self-assessments in this booklet. If I am unsure about anything I will ask for guidance on how to start to move more in a safe way.
I've given up. I'm too old, my health isn't good. It's too much effort. I'm too tired.	No one is too old to get moving. It won't be easy, but I know if I start to move more it can help improve my health, boost my energy, allow me to do more and help me be independent.
I've tried everything and nothing works for me.	Have I really tried everything? The activities I tried didn't seem to help but I can be creative, talk to others and come up with some ideas of new ways to try.
I hate exercising and I'm too fat.	I don't have to go to a gym or get sweaty. I can find activities I like to help me move more, even while watching TV. I will be more inclined to stick to doing things I enjoy. Being more active and eating well will help me start to lose some weight over time.
It costs too much.	I can think about ways to move that don't cost money. I can ask about low or no cost opportunities in my community.

Solutions to consider

Learn about pain and how moving more can help. A qualified health professional can help you understand what is going on in your body and assist you to develop a plan to become more physically active, guiding you in a safe way.

Start by trying to sit for less time during the day and doing some walking and stretches. Fit in physical activity whenever and wherever you can. Try taking the stairs or getting off the bus a stop early or parking your car further away from the shops.

Try out small amounts ('doses') of new activities or exercises to start with, then apply pacing (graded exposure) techniques – (see pg20-25 for guidance)

You can be active in many ways, including dancing, walking, or gardening. You can walk around the local shopping centre, a school oval, or a local park for free.

Recruit others to be active with you. They will help you stay motivated and feel safe.

Check with your council and community health centre as many offer free or low cost activity programs or phone Arthritis Tasmania InfoLine for ideas and information about local activity options.

Make a list of options that appeal to you. Explore activities you never thought about before, then stick with what you enjoy.

Go to (page13) to record your own barriers and potential solutions.

Preparing for change

Have an honest conversation with yourself and answer these questions:

What stage of change am I in? *Tick the box that applies to you*

- Resignation: "I'm not even thinking about making any changes"
- Contemplation: "I'm thinking about it"
- Preparation: "I've made up my mind to take action"
- Action: "I've started to make changes"

How active am I now? *Tick the box that applies to you*

- Very active – I do 30+mins physical activity a day, 7 days a week
- Moderately active – I have days when I am physically active
- Quite sedentary – I don't do a lot

Apart from when I sleep at night, how much time do I spend sitting or lying down each day? *Tick the box that applies to you*

- Six hours or more
- Four - six hours
- Two - four hours
- Less than two hours

What do I want to be able to do that I feel I can't do now?

(examples: play with my grandchildren, look after my garden, go out for a walk with my friends without feeling like I'm going to be too slow and left behind, get back into swimming, ride a bike, meet friends for coffee)

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What motivates me?

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Try keeping a diary for a week.

At the end of each day, record what you did in terms of physical activity and for how long. Don't forget to add in what's called 'incidental movement' (for example, cleaning and vacuuming, gardening, dancing to your favourite music, climbing stairs, walking from the bus stop etc.) as well as planned activities or work requirements.

DAY	ACTIVITY
MON
TUE
WED
THU
FRI
SAT
SUN

Identifying pros and cons

Ask yourself about the pros (benefits) and cons (things that get in the way) of changing your habits to increase the physical activity you do:

- How would life be better if I made some changes to move more?

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- How would the benefits relate to my overall health and happiness?

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Here are some examples from other people and room to add your own:

PROS	CONS
improve my health	takes too much time and energy
feel better about myself	it's too hot/cold outside
become stronger, have more energy	feel self-conscious
have fun with my grandchildren	am nervous about my health
take time to care for myself	have no one to be active with
meet/spend time with new people	might increase my pain
ADD YOUR OWN	ADD YOUR OWN
.....
.....
.....
.....

Solutions to my roadblocks

What are the main things stopping me from moving more?
What solutions could overcome these barriers?

MY CURRENT ROADBLOCKS	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
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Have you identified some possible solutions?

Great, the next step is to set some goals and make a plan. We have some practical ideas and guidance on how to do this but first it's important to know more about how our body systems work.



UNDERSTANDING YOUR AMAZING BODY

Understanding what is going on in your body can help you identify the things you have the power to change to better manage your health and wellbeing. Learning about pain and inflammation can help you know what is 'normal' and give you more confidence and knowledge to be able to challenge yourself to move more in a safe way.

Understanding Inflammation

Inflammation happens in all of us, whether we are aware of it or not. Our bodies' immune system creates inflammation to protect us from injury, infection and disease. The specific symptoms a person experiences will depend where in the body the inflammation is and what's causing it.

Signs of Inflammation

Acute inflammation is a relatively short-term process. It may last for as little as a few minutes but might last for longer, depending on the type of injury, disease or infection our body has been subjected to. Acute inflammation involves the transport of white blood cells to where they are needed within the body to help fight infection or heal damaged tissues. It is a positive sign that our body is trying to heal itself.

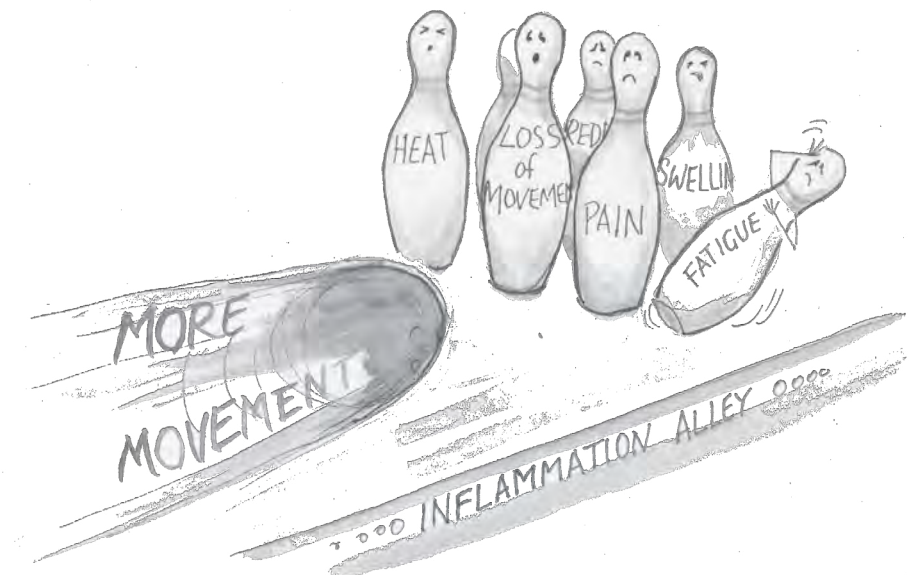
Chemicals produced by our immune system called '**pro-inflammatory**' substances trigger a 'state of alert', serving as flags to signal and guide the immune cells that are circulating in our blood.

In some circumstances, the inflammatory process is triggered and can last several months or even years. This is referred to as long-term or **chronic inflammation**. Often it is associated with auto-immune diseases, including inflammatory arthritis (eg: rheumatoid, juvenile, psoriatic). In this circumstance, our immune system has become overly protective, and tends to produce inflammation when it's not required – including within our joints. This is the type of inflammation your doctor will want to control with anti-inflammatory medication. Fortunately, modern drugs are very effective, and often 'low disease activity' or 'remission' can be achieved.

A number of lifestyle factors are thought to cause a low-level, background increase in our body's inflammation as we age, and this is now termed **metaflammation**. It is associated with other medical conditions, such as cardio-vascular disease, high blood pressure and diabetes, as well as obesity and osteoarthritis. The main cause is a sedentary lifestyle – our bodies have simply evolved to work best when we are more physically active than most people are in this 'technology age'.

How can moving more help?

What we want is to support the processes that regulate inflammation, for the level to remain at just the right amount - and that's where moving more can help. When our muscles contract, they release what's called anti-inflammatory hormones which help to lower the inflammation level in our body. While the chemical processes happening in the cells and systems of our amazing body are complex to understand, the key message is not – moving more releases substances that can regulate and normalise inflammation in our body. It can really help.



Understanding Pain

In recent years there has been much more recognition of what it's like to live with pain, and many advances in scientific understanding. Renowned Australian pain scientists and educators Professor Lorimer Moseley and Associate Professor David Butler have devoted their work to ensuring that this new knowledge and understanding reaches the people who need it most, those of us living with persisting pain. They started a 'Pain Revolution' to share this knowledge because the evidence is clear; 'Learning about pain can help us deal with it more effectively. When you understand why you hurt, you hurt less.'

Our amazing bodies have many 'protection systems' to keep us safe. Two of the most important are our immune system (mentioned previously), and it's close ally, the pain protection system. The pain protection system works by continuously analysing all the information coming into the brain from the nerves. How these signals are assessed (interpreted) depends on our own personal context. Our amazing brain is able to scan our context (what is happening in our lives and what has happened in the past, as well as our hopes and concerns for the future). All of this occurs in an instant, at a subconscious (automatic) level, at a rate of billions of synapse (signals) per second. If the brain concludes that the nerve signals are a new 'threat' (or a repeat of an old one) then pain may result. This is why all pain is real, but each of us has a unique pain experience, and many factors are involved that we are not even aware of.

You can see that pain is a great protection system – it's 'designed' to be unpleasant, as that tells us to rest the injured part (or our whole body if we are sick). And to start with, that is exactly what's needed!

Pain and Protection

Mostly when we are injured or sick, our immune system kicks in, we get better, and the pain resolves. However, pain can sometimes last and become 'persistent' – it's not telling us anything new and is no longer useful. It can even spread and feel worse – this is the system being 'over-protective'. It is really important to acknowledge and note that persistent pain is every bit as real as the acute pain we all experience when injured

or unwell and can become very difficult to deal with on a daily basis. Whilst we don't know all the reasons why some people develop persistent pain, we do know that pain relies on context and many things contribute to our experience of pain. Anything which changes the balance of danger/safety messages, can influence the protective pain system – either 'turning it up' or 'dialing it down'. These factors could be things we think, believe, see or hear, things happening in your body, even people in your life.

Introducing 'Max'

Imagine that you have a new puppy called Max. At first he only barks when a stranger knocks on your door. This is really helpful and makes you feel safe at night. However, as time goes on, he starts to bark for no good reason at all: when your friends arrive, when the TV is noisy and even during the night. Your friends stop calling, because Max frightens them (even though you know he wouldn't harm them). Often, pain starts out being helpful like Max's barking, but over time our body gets better (more practiced) at pain and it becomes a problem (like that overprotective bark!) Just as Max now barks at many things (most of which are not a threat), your body can learn to produce pain when there is no injury or damage. This is unhelpful adaptation or 'sensitisation' of our pain systems.





Why do I experience more pain even when I am doing less activity?

When our systems have adapted to become over-protective, our bodies can then interpret 'normal', safe movements as a threat from which we require protection - and more pain is the result. This is like our friend Max who now barks when friendly people arrive. In this situation, many people either avoid the movement or activity that led to more pain, or try to push through it and experience a pain flare later. Either way, we tend to adapt by moving less over time, and then the cycle repeats. Some people's bodies become so highly protective that even thinking about a movement can increase pain.

Fortunately, our bodies are very adaptable ('bioplastic'): now we know that, with time, we can re-train our systems to become less protective and sensitive - allowing us to do more without experiencing pain. It takes some work, patience, perseverance and courage, to learn how to boost the safety messages our brain receives - but it is possible!



Need to know more

Pain Revolution www.painrevolution.org.au (page 48)

(Adapted from Butler DS & Moseley GL, 2013

Explain Pain Noigroup and the Pain Revolution

'Understanding Pain;-The Target Concepts' Consumer Information 2019)

Boom and Bust... we all do it

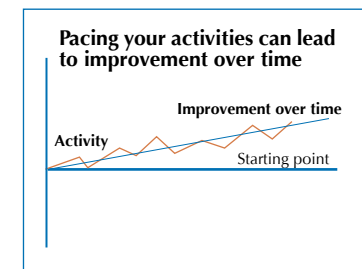
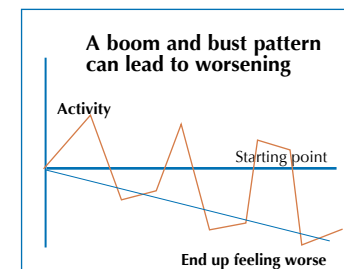
When it comes to physical activity, it is really common for most of us to get into a cycle of 'boom and bust' which is a pattern of activity that can lead to more fatigue and pain over time.

When you're motivated to move more and keen to make progress... you want results quickly, right? Here's a scenario that many can relate to:

You wake to a beautiful day, your pain is not too bad and you decide that it's time to get on top of all those weeds in your garden. Time flies by, you're happy with the progress you're making and just want to finish that last section. Before you know it you've been at it for three hours without a break. What happens next day, the following day and the day after that? You're really stiff and sore and your pain levels have gone through the roof. You move less now because you are tired, feeling sore and in pain. This is an example of a boom and bust approach to activity.

You've overdone it - you can't do much physical activity at all without pain and fatigue, and it can take days to recover. Both avoidance and overactivity are associated with poorer outcomes - they tend to 'teach' your body to produce more pain, so that over time you end up feeling worse - and the pain is 'in control'. Pacing is a critical part of taking back that control!

Fig. 1



Using pacing to slowly challenge your pain

Pacing is an essential skill to learn and practice and is a technique that will really help you to build tolerance and be able to move more over time. Pacing applies to all of us and all the things we do. It's all about re-training (adapting) our bodies, so that normal movements and activities are less associated with pain.

Pacing really helps

It's may take some time to learn how to pace effectively, but it is surprising how well it works when it is done well. Janet

Pacing gives you a way to break physical activities into smaller chunks, finding the middle road between over doing it and under doing it. It also involves an important process of 'desensitisation' using graded exposure to movement in an effort to decrease your pain systems' sensitivity.

What does this mean?

- **Pacing** – taking frequent short breaks. This works well for activities that you need to do – such as sweeping the floor.
- **Graded exposure** – gradually increasing the amount of activity, or 'pacing it up', can allow you to return to things you want to do.

Examples of breaking activities into smaller chunks.

Weed with a small bucket, empty it when full, then rest for a while.

Clean one room a day, instead of the whole house in one go.



Graded exposure for pain works in a similar way to how people approach trying to overcome their phobias (e.g. fear of spiders, fear of flying etc). By slowly exposing themselves in gradual stages to the thing they fear, they can change their response and calm their body's over-protective reaction.

Learning to safely increase your physical movement this way involves challenging your body through a series of shallow, gradual steps to slowly increase the level of activity you are able to do. In time this will help to modify and 'turn down' the sensitivity of your body's pain protection system. Think of it as turning down your alarm system.

Is it something you HAVE to do?

Break it down into smaller chunks.

Is it something you WANT to do better or for longer?

Break it down and then Pace it up.

You may already have your own ways of breaking down those essential activities – although if you were taught to always 'get the job finished', – this might need a change in thinking! If you have been living with persisting pain for a while, you sometimes have to teach your body how to move normally again and the best way to do this is to go slow and do it in stages.

When we exercise our muscles and joints, particularly if we haven't been physically active for some time, we expect to be a bit sore and stiff afterwards and sometimes for the next day or two. This is a normal reaction as our body adapts to become stronger – and this will improve over time.

A good way to start is by setting small and simple physical movement goals.



Pacing It Up - When You're In Control

'Pacing It Up' or graded exposure has a number of parts, and to be successful, it's important to look at each in turn...

Part 1 – Setting your GOALS

Part 2 – Working out your BASELINE

Part 3 – Deciding on your BUILD-UP RATE

Part 4 – Writing down your ACTION PLAN

Part 5 – Keeping track of your PROGRESS

Part 6 – Tweaking and REFINING YOUR PLAN

Part 1 - Setting your GOALS

What do you want to be able to do that you can't do now? Think of the things you've stopped doing, or don't do as much as you'd like.

Decide what you want to achieve – be specific and realistic.

Think about your goal(s) and write them down or put a picture relevant to your goal on your fridge to serve as a visual reminder of what you are working to achieve.

You will need to start slowly and take a number of steps along the way to achieving your goal. Break down your goal into smaller, simpler and easier steps.

Here are some examples of other peoples' goals:

'I want to be able to play with and look after my grandchildren'.

'I want to get back to playing golf again'.

'I want to build and maintain my own vegie garden'.

'I want to be able to travel independently to go visit my family'.

These are examples of types of activities people have planned as steps toward helping themselves move more.

- walk 2 laps around the lounge room during the TV advert breaks
- do some stretches before I get out of bed each day
- walk the dog every day this week
- stretch my hands, fingers and feet for two minutes, twice a day
- try seated exercises
- walk to the letterbox and back twice each day
- park my car further away from the shops
- walk to get my paper from the newsagent
- join a dance class or dance daily to my favourite tunes at home
- join a warm water exercise class

'To achieve long-term change, I think we need to make that mental shift, because ultimately that will mean we have incorporated activity into our daily life. Realistically, to be sustainable that's what we need, as stand alone exercise is hard to sustain when the benefits are not so tangible in the short term.

It's very easy to avoid exercise today if your motivation is some vague theoretical benefit some time down the track. But conversely, it's very easy to sustain if its linked to something you enjoy – which for me is my vegie garden. And that provides a strong motivation when you have setbacks and flare ups'. Sarah

Remember – It is important to start out slowly, step by step and gradually increase your activity over time.

Don't make it too hard for yourself – be realistic.

Seek opportunities to increase your everyday movement. Make a real effort to reduce your 'sitting time' during the day. Every little bit counts, even the stretches you can do while you're watching TV, walking through your house or waiting for the kettle to boil!

Try to balance your activity throughout the week rather than doing more less often and risk going 'bust'.

In selecting your activities, try to pick one from each of the three different types of activity groups i.e. mobility, strength/balance and fitness (the ones that make you puff a little) (see page 39). You may just start with one type.

Not able to be on your feet? There are lots of activities you can do seated including yoga and tai chi, strength and balance movements or you might want to try to exercise in water. If you are unsure, talk to your GP or health professional about your choices. (See page 40 for more activity ideas)

Part 2 - Working out your BASELINE

You need to start at the level of movement that you can comfortably do now, without triggering a pain flare. This will be your baseline, and it is key to your success. Here are the steps to work out (self-assess) where to safely begin:

- Measure how much you can comfortably do now (see below)
- Take three attempts and try to do them on 'good' and 'bad' days
- Then work out the average you could do over the 3 days and start at a level 20% below so that you have a safe buffer.

ACTIVITY	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	TOTAL	AVERAGE total div 3	-20% = baseline
Steps I could walk	1600	800	1200	3600	1200	960
Time to practice tai-chi	15min	10min	8min	33min	11min	9min



Need to know more

Maths not your cup of tea!

Phone the Arthritis InfoLine if you need help working out your plan. Call 1800 011 041

Ways to measure your physical activity tolerance

What measure you choose for your pacing will depend on the type of activity and your preferences. Some examples are listed below – the important thing is that measuring **is important** - especially at the beginning, as it helps prevent you trying to do too much too soon – (that's the '**boom and bust**' pattern again)

- Walking – number of steps, measured on a pedometer, phone app or physical activity tracker
- Swimming – number of laps
- Dancing – number of songs
- Resistance – amount of weight – this could be the amount of water in a drink bottle or watering can
- Time can be used to measure most activities
- Some people devise their own point system – 1 point to the letter box, 2 points to the end of the road etc, to help with getting started.

Part 3 - Deciding on your BUILD-UP RATE

Take the time to get comfortable with testing out your baseline. If you find you can't achieve it without a pain flare up, then your baseline is too high – this is common and easily corrected by reducing your baseline. Aim initially to complete your chosen activity for at least 1-2 weeks at this baseline level. Once you are confident that your baseline is 'just right', you can work out your 'build up rate'. A 'rule of thumb' is to aim for a maximum of 10% increase over one week – but it can be less than this too. Having an understanding that it is normal to experience some discomfort as you progress, will help you be less fearful of taking the next step to challenge your body and move.

'I might be a bit sore but my body will get used to it and my tolerance for movement will improve over time.'

Part 4 – Writing down your ACTION PLAN

What will work for me?

The best plan for you is the one that you will do! Taking ownership and designing what will work for you are critical in helping you succeed. Think of your plan as working out the ‘just right’ amount or ‘quota’ of activity or exercise that will help with your training.

- Try to stick to your quota, whether it is a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ day.
- If you are having a ‘good’ day – avoid doing more than your ‘quota’ as this can get you back into that ‘boom and bust’ cycle of activity.
- If you experience a setback or a ‘bad day’, try not to stop – but it is OK to modify your activity level.

Here’s an example, with the amount achieved added into the blue squares each day:

Goal/Activity Walk to cafe (about 5000 steps)	Target for week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Week 1 baseline	1000	1100	965	1008	965	1008	1120	1170
W2 baseline+10%	1100	1120	1105	940	1020	1080	1110	1140
W3 W2 +10%	1210	1160	1240	1210	1190	1001	1150	1250

‘In addition to all the physiological reasons for starting small and building up activity levels gradually with pacing principles, I think the pace also has important impacts on the mental side of it. Starting small isn’t too scary (at least not scary enough to avoid) - it needs to be a point that isn’t too far out of reach, something that doesn’t sound crazy to someone who has lost confidence in their body’s ability to perform. You really want the ‘Goldilocks Principle - not too much to cause a flare-up or appear so unrealistic that we don’t even try, but not so easy that we don’t feel a sense of achievement when we put the plan into action.’ Sarah

Part 5 – Keeping track of your PROGRESS

Knowing you are making progress will help motivate you to keep going. To keep track of your progress, choose a method that suits you.

Here are some ideas that other people have found useful:

- Writing notes on a wall calendar
 - Recording progress in a diary
 - Using a chart on the fridge, adding stars when milestones are achieved
- And when you reach your goals along the way congratulate and reward yourself... you deserve it (just try to make it a healthy reward!)

Pacing will help you

- Do more of what is important to you
- Experience fewer pain flares
- Reduce pain and fatigue (tiredness) over time

‘The pacing approach also gives you time to imagine a different lifestyle for yourself, and adjust to the notion that you are capable of physical activity and you can make plans and dreams around a more active lifestyle. You have to learn to trust your body’s ability to cope with activity without creating flare-ups, and have confidence again.’ Sarah

Part 6 – Tweaking and REFINING YOUR PLAN

Take time to revisit and review your plan to evaluate how you are going:

- Does my plan need adjusting?
- Have I been too ambitious, do I need to tweak it a little to add more steps?
- Do I need a change of activity?
- I’ve achieved my milestone, is it time to set some new goals?
-

Your turn now. Go to the page (28-29) to record your plan



Need to know more

painhealth.csse.uwa.edu.au

MY ACTION PLAN

This is what I want to achieve... MY GOAL IS
These are the steps I will take along the path to achieving my goal

Activity	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Total	Average = total divided by 3	Less 20%

For example: Day 1=1600 Day 2 = 800 Day 3 = 1200
 The average is $1600 + 800 + 1200 = 3600$ divided by 3 (number of days) =1200
 20% of the average $1200 \times (20 \text{ divided by } 100) = 240$ therefore less 20% of the average is $1200 - 240 = 960$

Goal /Activity	Target for week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Week 1 (date) write your baseline here								
Week 2 (date) write your baseline here								
Week 3 (date) write your baseline here								

Pick a date to start:
You are trying to make physical activity a habit in your day and every little bit you do each day can add up to making a big difference to your total activity level. To help do this, consider choosing a time you can stick to so that you can get into a routine every day.
Consider which is the best time for you
My activity time will be:



GETTING STARTED

If you haven't been physically active for some time, talk to your doctor and/or health professional before starting a new plan to increase your physical activity. Physiotherapists and exercise physiologists are health professionals who can suggest safe movements and ways to use pacing well. If you are eligible for a General Practitioner Care Plan, you can talk to your GP about seeing these allied health professionals under your care plan, which will help offset the cost for your appointments.

How much physical activity should I aim for?

If your levels of physical activity have dropped over time, just getting into the habit of moving more each day is a great initial achievement. How fit and strong you can become depends on many factors – but we do know that, for people with arthritis, consistency (daily practise) is the most important factor. For adult Australians, the general guide is that we should do at least 30mins of physical activity on most days of the week. This doesn't have to be done continuously – every minute adds up! Don't forget gardening, playing with pets or taking the stairs rather than the lift also count as exercise. If you have arthritis and haven't been active for a while, it is a good idea to start with shorter 5 to 10-minute sessions of the activity of your choice. Stick with your paced approach.



Remember the Goldilocks Principle

You may like to start with increasing your 'everyday' or incidental movement before adding a new activity. Do less than you think you can manage. Use your pacing technique and if you are coping well, do a little bit more next time and keep building gradually. Whatever activity you choose – always start with some movements to warm up your body and your joints. This can help prevent pain and injury. Also don't forget to cool down before you finish with some movements and stretches. This can help prevent muscle pain and stiffness the next day.

When to be careful or to stop an activity

Remember that many people with arthritis have some amount of pain most of the time. This is not a reason to avoid physical activity. Modify your activity to allow for any minor symptoms or known 'problem joints' that may be a little grumbly. You should stop if you notice extra or unusual pain while exercising and don't vigorously exercise a joint that is red, hot, swollen or very painful.

Sticking to your plan and staying on track

It can be difficult to make 'moving more' a regular part of your life so here are some tips to help you keep motivated and on track...

- Do activities that you like and make them fun. You will be much more motivated to do them.
- Do something that is convenient and affordable. Every second counts!
- Get into a routine... start with 5-10 minutes twice a day, do some stretching before you get out of bed, while you are sitting on the couch or at the kitchen table. Go for a walk in the fresh air in your yard or to the street corner and back. It will soon become a habit.
- Some people find it more enjoyable to do things with others. Involve a friend, family, neighbour or colleague to join you in your activity routine, or join a group. Incorporate moving more in your socialising, for example, when meeting a friend for a coffee, arrange to go for a walk together first.

- Focus on short term goals. Reward yourself when you reach them. Then make new ones that are more challenging.
- Use a calendar, diary or activity planner. Write down your activity times to see how you are progressing. Mark off your achievements in a way that will motivate you.
- Put pictures or cut out words and images from magazines on your fridge to inspire and remind you of what you want to do and/or where you want to be.
- Record how you felt after your physical activity. That way you can refer back to your entries at times when you feel less motivated.
- Change the type of activity you do from time to time to keep it interesting. Learn new things. Join new groups.
- Whatever you choose to do, start gradually and build up slowly (we say that a lot but that is because it is so important) You want to set yourself up to succeed

Exercise Buddies: Tai Chi Morning Teas

A group of four people in a community wanted to do Tai Chi but couldn't find or afford a class. Instead they bought a DVD– Tai Chi for arthritis and took it in turns to host Tai Chi mornings at their homes, completing a lesson together and then sharing a cuppa.



Setbacks and Comebacks

Even the best laid plans can be derailed from time to time. Holidays, having to break your routine due to illness, injury or needing to care for someone. You get bored, lose motivation or the urge to continue. It seems like too much effort; your goal feels like it's too far away. It's no fun being active by yourself. Expect to face some setbacks as you work towards your goals.

How you respond to any bumps along the way is important. As frustrated and discouraged as you feel, don't lose hope and please don't give up on yourself. Make the setback your platform for your comeback.

Acknowledge that things haven't gone to plan, put it aside in your mind and focus your attention on what you could do to get back on track.

Ask for some help and guidance if you need it:

Do I need to go back to my doctor, physio or exercise physiologist to get some guidance to help me get back on track?

I could phone the Arthritis InfoLine for information and ideas.

Revisit and revise your plan:

Consider putting some extra smaller steps in as you progress towards achieving your goal i.e. set some meaningful short-term goals and reward yourself when you achieve them.

Take it easy when you begin again. Do small amounts of activity until you feel better and then build up.

You may want to change the type of activity, to try something new.

Safety and Monitoring

Tune into your body so you can learn what level of soreness and stiffness is usual for you. This will help you safely challenge your pain through movement. However if pain is new or unusual it is wise to get it checked out before continuing.

'It is ok to challenge my usual pain as this will help me build tolerance. It will improve over time.'

Monitor the intensity of your physical activity. Aim for what is termed 'light to moderate intensity' i.e. while you are doing the activity you should be able to maintain a conversation without having to stop because you are breathless.

Try new activities – but test them out by doing half or quarter of the activity or class to begin with (don't feel pressured to keep up in the class – go at your own pace). Have a test run to see how your body responds.

'I know some discomfort is normal as my body reacts and adapts'

Worried about your balance and falling?

- Make sure you are wearing suitable footwear for your activity (not 'slip ons') and clear any trip hazards (including any pets!)
- If you are exercising at home or in a group, consider having a chair nearby so you can lean on it to help you balance. If you normally use mobility aids such as a walking stick or frame, keep using them.
- Walking poles can also help you to feel more balanced when walking.
- Hydration is really important. Most of us don't drink enough water during the day and when being physically active our body is working harder so we need to ensure we take in enough fluid.
- If you have low blood sugar, make sure you have a source of quickly absorbed glucose on hand if you need it. If you are out exercising or attending classes, take along any relevant prescribed medications just in case you find you need them.
- Many of us forget to breathe properly when we are trying to exercise. Learning how to breathe steadily through movement will really help. Try listening to the sound of your breathing and focusing on a long breath out. Breathing effectively helps lower your heart rate and can ease pain.

How will I know if I've done too much?

It can be hard to predict how your body will cope with a new activity. The most important thing to do is to listen to your body. It is completely normal to feel a bit sore or stiff for 24-48hrs after challenging your body by doing a new activity... just ask anyone who plays sport or goes to a gym or exercise class. If you are especially tired or sore in the days following a new activity, it's likely that your determination or enthusiasm were a little ahead of your body's current tolerance for exercise. Next time you exercise, slow down or do less. Take some time to adjust your plan so that you are back in the '**Goldilocks Zone**' – enough to be challenging but not so much that you experience an increase in your protective pain. Talk to your physiotherapist or exercise physiologist if you continue to experience pain after exercising.



'I was a bit sore and achy the day after my first class, but back to my normal self by the weekend. I'm glad my class leader told us that might happen. Knowing this I felt in control and not fearful of what I now know was a normal body response from increased activity. I've been able to modify how much I do each week, gradually being able to do more each time'. Helen –Strength class participant.

Remember – for physical activity to be helpful it needs to be challenging enough to cause our body to respond. People often ask why they are stiff and sore the day after they exercise. Some discomfort is normal as our body reacts and adapts in response to movement. If your muscles are weaker when you start you are likely to have more of this soreness. This will improve as you get stronger. When people have had pain for a long time they may become 'sensitised' to it. That's the job of our nerves, to be sensitive and respond to change. However, as we have learnt, sometimes the body overprotects, interpreting this new physical activity as a threat, even though it is entirely safe. Understand that this can happen. Remember 'graded exposure' to movement? We have to meet our pain at some point and nudge into it slowly, in order for our body to adapt.



PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES THAT ARE HELPFUL

Did you know that ‘Motion is Lotion’

(credit for this catchphrase: Associate Professor David Butler)

Movement and what is referred to as ‘loading’ (i.e. making our muscles and bones work harder against gravity through weight bearing movement), are critical for our body’s tissue health and repair.

Cartilage is the shiny white, protective tissue on the ends of our bones. Synovial fluid is the thick liquid found in the cavity of many of our joints that lubricates them and assists with ease of movement. When our cartilage is healthy it is smooth and slippery, and it protects the ends of our bones. It can withstand great forces and compression, it helps by distributing the load evenly through the joints and together with synovial fluid, allows for near frictionless movement of the surfaces of the joint. In other words, the cartilage and synovial fluid helps our bones to glide over one another to allow us to move freely and without pain.

In many forms of arthritis the articular cartilage in our joints can become roughened and our wonderful, lubricating fluid is affected as well.

The good news is that moving more, especially under load, can help the health of our cartilage and joints. Movement and loading can increase the production of synovial fluid, helping to nourish the cartilage and aiding the removal of waste products. Motion truly is lotion!



Not all forms of physical activity are appropriate for every kind of arthritis. Remember, before you start you can ask your GP and healthcare team to help you develop a plan to suit your type of arthritis, general health and lifestyle. They can suggest some useful ways to modify activities. Generally, we need to do a mix of all three types of activities:

<p>Mobility Activities –will help maintain and improve the range of movement of joints/muscles – reaching, bending and stretching movements to help you stay flexible.</p>	<p>Some ideas to think about – Tai Chi (standing or seated) Yoga Dancing Gardening Range of repeated movements</p>
<p>Strengthening (resistance training) and Balance Activities –will help strengthen muscles and maintain a healthy blood sugar level. Strong muscles support and take the pressure off sore joints. Strengthening movements help strengthen bones and improve balance. A progression for some exercises is to perform them faster, which builds power.</p>	<p>Body weight exercises (eg. squats) Resistance training with free weights or exercise bands (There are group classes designed specifically for people with arthritis.) Moderate work in your garden. Climbing stairs instead of using a lift.</p>
<p>Fitness (aerobic) activities –will benefit your heart, lungs and general wellbeing. These activities use the larger muscles in the body, rather than exercising a specific area, and may make you puff a little. This builds stamina and endurance, and (over time) can help reduce fatigue.</p>	<p>Brisk walking Swimming Cycling Walking your dog (or someone else’s!) Marching on the spot with knees high Washing the car Dancing</p>

'Arthritis Friendly' physical activity

There is no particular exercise or activity that is recommended for all people with arthritis. Choose an activity you enjoy and that is convenient for you to do. Low-impact exercises, with less jarring through your joints, are usually most comfortable.

Examples of low-impact activities include:

Walking

Nordic walking with poles

Aquatic physiotherapy, swimming or warm water exercise classes

Strength training

Tai Chi, Qigong, Yoga and Pilates

Cycling, indoor on a stationary bike, outdoor, or electric

Dancing

Chair-based exercises - for people who cannot stand or lack the mobility to move easily from seated positions

Warm Water Exercise

Water exercise is a popular form of physical activity for people with arthritis. The buoyancy of the water takes pressure off sore joints and you may find you can move more freely than you can on land. Warm water can also be soothing for sore muscles and stiff joints.



Strength Training

Strength training involves working the muscles a little harder than normal, usually against some form of resistance. Regardless of age, ability and fitness level, everyone can benefit from strength training. Muscle weakness and wasting, fatigue and a lack of stamina are common in arthritis. Research has shown that people with arthritis can safely participate in strength training to prevent and even reverse, muscle weakness. Strength training can increase the strength, endurance and size of muscles, which can help to support and reduce the amount of strain and stress on the joints; improve posture, balance, mobility and bone density; increase stamina and help with weight loss. Unlike other forms of exercise, strength training need only be repeated 2-3 times per week – this allows the muscles to recover and adapt (get stronger).

Tai Chi

Tai Chi is an ancient, Chinese martial art form, practiced around the world as a type of gentle exercise. There are many forms of Tai Chi, suitable for people with arthritis. Most involve slow, controlled movements and postures (to improve the flow of life energy through the body).

A specific program 'Tai Chi for Arthritis' was created in 1997 by Dr Paul Lam. Studies have shown that practicing Tai Chi can help reduce pain and stiffness. It exercises the muscles and joints throughout the body and improves flexibility and ability to move. Tai Chi has been shown to increase muscle strength; and improve balance and posture. It can also help to decrease stress; to relax your body and improve your sense of wellbeing.

Nordic Walking

Nordic walking uses specially designed walking poles that look similar to ski poles. Suitable for people of all ages and abilities, this type of walking activates 90% of the body's muscles, burns more calories, tones upper body muscles and reduces the load and strain on the lower part of the body. People with arthritis find it can help reduce pain and stiffness, and improve their mobility, balance and muscle strength.



Need to know more

www.arthritisaustralia.com.au/managing-arthritis/

THESE ARE SOME ACTIVITIES I WOULD LIKE TO TRY

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WHO CAN HELP?

While there are many ways to start increasing your activity, sometimes advice from experts is helpful.

There are health and exercise professionals who can provide you with guidance. Always look for an accredited practitioner, or one who is a member of their professional association.

It is important to find someone you can work with and to build a trusted relationship with that person. If you are not happy – you have not yet found the practitioner who is the right fit for your team. Try someone else rather than drawing the conclusion that no one in that profession can be of any help.

Physiotherapists – can advise you on exercises chosen specifically for your condition, posture and ways to relieve pain. They can assist you to make a plan to move more and help monitor how you are going. When necessary, they can also use treatments to help keep your joints and muscles flexible. Some physiotherapy practices also run supervised group exercise sessions which may include strength training, pilates and warm water exercise.

Exercise Physiologists – can give you advice about exercise, including the best types of exercise for your health and ability. They can help you make a plan and practice safe movements to build your strength, balance, endurance and flexibility. Some Exercise Physiologists work in their own practice or within general or physiotherapy practices. Some will even make home visits. Many also run small group exercise sessions.

Occupational Therapists – can advise you on how to take stress and strain off joints affected by arthritis. They can show you ways to pace your activities by simplifying tasks and advise you about a range of assistive equipment and aids.

Arthritis & Osteoporosis Tasmania – can provide information about evidence-based activities you might want to consider. They can answer your questions, let you know about services within your community and help support you to build the confidence to start moving again.



FINDING PROFESSIONALS WHO CAN HELP

Australian Physiotherapy Association Ph. **1300 306 622**

Find a physiotherapist: choose.physio/findaphysio

Exercise and Sports Science Australia Ph. **(07) 3171 3335**

Find an accredited exercise physiologist (AEP), accredited exercise scientist (AES) or accredited sports scientist (ASPS): www.essa.org.au/find-aep/

Occupational Therapy Australia Ph. **1300 682 878**

Find an occupational therapist: www.otaus.com.au/find-an-ot

Dieticians Association of Australia Ph. **1800 812 942**

Find an accredited dietician: daa.asn.au/find-an-apd/



RESOURCES

Here are some resources that might help to guide you in your quest to move more. If you are looking on the internet for online YouTube tutorials, classes or useful apps to track your progress, it's a good idea to get some recommendations from your health provider to ensure that you are selecting activities/support resources that will be suitable for you.

If you are looking for local, healthy lifestyle, activity programs, contact Arthritis & Osteoporosis Tasmania's InfoLine 1800 011 041 and/or your local community health centre.

DVD

Tai Chi for Arthritis – Dr Paul Lam (Seated Tai Chi version also available)

Free Resources available on the Internet

Physical Activity and Movement

Arthritis Australia www.arthritisaustralia.com.au

Arthritis & Osteoporosis Tasmania www.arthritistas.org.au

Safe Exercise at Home

www.safeexerciseathome.org.au/

Australian Physiotherapy Association

Information on physical activity and exercise for older people

ESCAPE-pain (UK)

escape-pain.org/

HelpGuide

How to start exercising and stick to it.
How to Exercise if you have limited mobility
Active at any size – getting started
www.helpguide.org

Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines:

Tips and Ideas for Adults (2014)
www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ti-18-64years

OneYou – for your body (UK)

www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/move-more/

Understanding and managing pain

The Pain Revolution – Resources for people in Pain
www.painrevolution.org/chronic-pain-resources-public

RECOVERY Strategies – Dr Greg Lehman

www.greglehman.ca

painHEALTH - Clinically supported information, tips, support and personal stories to help you manage musculoskeletal pain
painhealth.csse.uwa.edu.au/

Healthy Eating

Eat Well Tasmania

www.eatwelltas.org.au/



REFERENCES

Arthritis Australia

10 Steps for Living Well with Arthritis

Info Sheets: Physical Activity, Water Exercise, Strength Training, Tai Chi

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Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines

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Australian Physiotherapy Association - Safe Exercise at Home

www.safeexerciseathome.org.au/

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Choose Health: Be Active, Commonwealth of Australia, 2008

Butler DS & Moseley GL

Explain Pain

Noigroup publications, 2013

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Moving Medicine

movingmedicine.ac.uk/ 2018

GetSelfHelp, Self-Help for Chronic Pain & Fatigue

www.getselfhelp.co.uk//chronicfp.htm 2018

Life After Pain

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The Explain Pain Handbook: Protectometer

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Arthritis & Osteoporosis TASMANIA



Working together to make a positive difference to the lives of all Tasmanians affected by arthritis, osteoporosis and related musculoskeletal conditions.

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