

Chronic Pain Pacing & Activity Diary

MANAGING ENERGY ENVELOPES & BREAKING THE BOOM-AND-BUST CYCLE

Patient: _____

Week Starting: _____

Clinician: Physiotherapist Ahmad Al Hariri

1. The Principles of Activity Pacing

Living with chronic pain often leads to a **"Boom-and-Bust Cycle"**: overactivity on good days resulting in severe pain flares, leading to enforced rest and deconditioning. Pacing helps you stabilize your daily function by working within your current energy envelope:

- **Plan Before You Act:** Break larger tasks (e.g., house cleaning, gardening, grocery shopping) into smaller, manageable chunks rather than trying to finish everything at once.
- **Rest Before You Hurt:** Stop an activity **before** pain or fatigue forces you to stop, not after. Set a time or distance limit and stick to it.
- **Alternate Activities:** Switch between standing, sitting, and moving tasks throughout the day to prevent static muscle overload.
- **Baseline Consistency:** Maintain a stable baseline of daily activity on both good and bad days—avoid doing too much when you feel well.

2. Weekly Activity & Pacing Log

Use this log to track daily tasks, planned rest breaks, and pain levels (scored from 0 = No Pain to 10 = Maximum Pain). Notice patterns between pacing and symptom stability.

DAY / TIME	ACTIVITY / TASK PERFORMED	PLANNED BREAK / PACING STRATEGY	PAIN LEVEL (0–10)	REFLECTIONS / LEARNINGS
Day 1 Morning Afternoon				
Day 2 Morning Afternoon				
Day 3 Morning Afternoon				
Day 4 Morning Afternoon				
Day 5 Morning Afternoon				

DAY / TIME	ACTIVITY / TASK PERFORMED	PLANNED BREAK / PACING STRATEGY	PAIN LEVEL (0–10)	REFLECTIONS / LEARNINGS
Day 6 Morning Afternoon				
Day 7 Morning Afternoon				

Weekly Review Prompt: Did you notice any flare-ups caused by doing too much on one day? How did taking planned rest breaks affect your overall endurance and pain scores by the end of the week? Discuss these insights in your next physiotherapy session.