

## Tool 10 - Have a set-back plan

**Is it realistic to think you will never have a set-back?**

**The simple answer is NO!**

**Developing a set-back plan is good pain self-management.**

**Ask your healthcare provider if you need help in making one if you are not sure. Make a note of what triggered your set-back and what helped. This could be useful information if and when you experience another.**

### **Prioritise your responsibilities.**

Pace yourself. Break up tasks into smaller portions.

Rest in between. Reduce your activities until the set-back settles. Be kind to yourself. Say 'NO' to any unnecessary demands put upon you until you are feeling healthier. And..... don't be too proud or scared to ASK for help!

### **Taking your medication**

Follow or ask the advice of your GP or Pharmacist about medication and when you need to take it. If you have to take regular medication think of ways to remind you to take it. Many people just simply forget. Use post it notes, a timer or get someone to remind you.

### **A set-back plan**

It is not realistic to think that you will never have a set-back ever again.

Remember if you are an over achiever; it is easy to forget to pace yourself and in turn you may experience a set-back.

So the first thing not to do is panic, but many people do. It is best to have a set-back plan ready if one occurs.

Set backs are usually caused by doing too much – overdoing it, pressure from others, or just forgetting you have a pain problem. Try not to get annoyed with yourself, it can cause more stress and pain.

**If you are not sure how to prepare a set-back plan ask your GP or health care professional for help.**

Please remember that taking medication if you have musculoskeletal pain (back, leg, arm, neck etc.) may mask the pain and encourage you to do more.

### **For musculoskeletal pain (back, leg, arm, neck etc.)**

Apply heat and/or ice in a way that makes you most comfortable. To relieve initial pain, you could apply ice packs wrapped in damp towels for 5 minutes every hour for the first one or two days. Always make sure you have a cloth of some type between your skin and the ice, to prevent burning the skin and causing an ice burn. It is not recommended that you lie on an ice pack. (People with rheumatic problems may prefer to use heat rather than ice). *Again, if you are not sure, seek advice from your GP or health care professional.*

### **Take it easy.**

Briefly cutback on normal activities, lie or sit down for a short while and relax but not for too long. Bed rest weakens muscle strength rapidly, you lose about 1% of total muscle strength a day if you become inactive - remember keeping active and mobile can actually speed your recovery.

### **Try to start moving gently**

Remember to pace yourself. Begin gentle stretching and movement as soon as possible to regain normal suppleness. Keeping active may seem alien to you, but in pain self-management terms, learning to live with a persistent pain is a skill to be learned. Don't be put off – it does work!

### **Relaxation.**

Using relaxation is another good way of managing a set-back. Also accept the situation and that you are experiencing a set-back, and just as it came, it will go.

