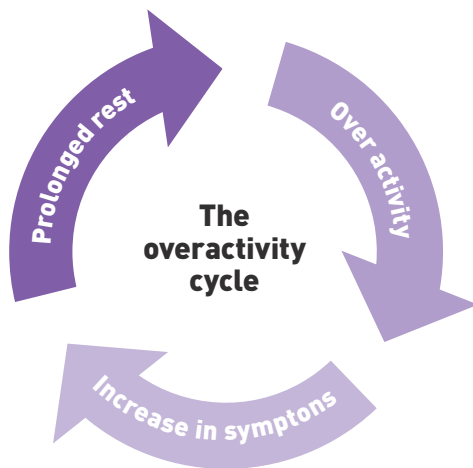


Activity pacing

Overactivity and its consequences

It is often tempting to do activities or jobs on days when your joint symptoms are mild, or to do a lot more in a shorter period of time to make up for days when you felt tired or your pain was worse. Overactivity can happen when you increase the load placed on your joint by a large amount and in a short space of time, for example, by doubling your usual walking distance in a single day to get all of your household chores done quickly. Although the increase in pain felt after this type of overactivity does not mean the joint has been damaged, it can be uncomfortable and requires rest to settle it.



There are many negative consequences of being caught in the over activity cycle. In the short term, these include:

- Increased severity of pain
- Anticipating severe pain with physical activity
- Increased tension, worry and anxiety
- Avoidance or cancelling activities, including pleasurable activities that make you feel good

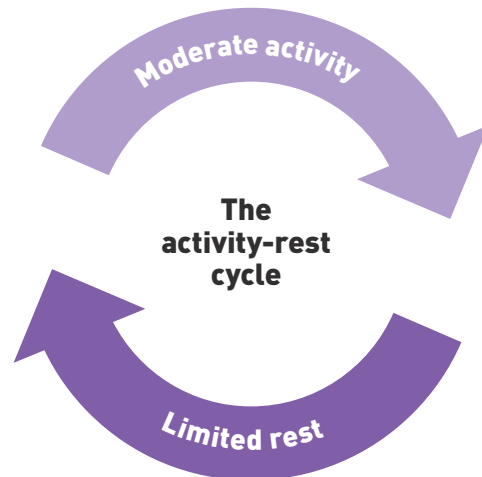
Over time, this can lead to a worsening of the problem as you engage in less physical activity and become deconditioned, losing muscle strength, flexibility and general fitness.

How should I manage my physical activity?

“Pace your activity” by breaking everyday activities and exercise into smaller portions. Rather than one long session of physical activity, do shorter periods of physical activity or exercise, with a rest in between. Pacing your activity means finding the

middle road - and not overdoing or underdoing physical activity. Activity pacing is important in pain management because it helps you stay active doing the things you want to do and helps you to avoid pain flares.

To pace your physical activity, you should focus more on the amount of time you spend doing an activity rather than on the amount of pain experienced. Think about the distance you have walked, or the



time you have spent standing up, to tell you when to stop the activity and take a rest. You can gradually build up your physical activity over time using this approach by increasing the distance walked, or time spent being active, before taking a break.

Some knee pain is to be expected during physical activity and exercise, and when you are trying to increase your physical activity levels. Comfortable levels of discomfort and pain are OK. If you are feeling good about your physical activity, it can be tempting to quickly increase your amount of activity over a short space of time. Avoid this as you may fall into the over activity cycle!

Some benefits that you might experience from pacing activity:

- Continue doing pleasurable activities rather than cutting back.
- Stay involved in important daily activities.
- Control the amount of symptoms you have during activities rather than having the symptoms control you.
- Avoid extreme flare-ups of symptoms.
- Become more productive in the long run.
- Gradually increase your general levels of physical activity and therefore gain improvements in strength and fitness.
- Less pain, tension, and fatigue.