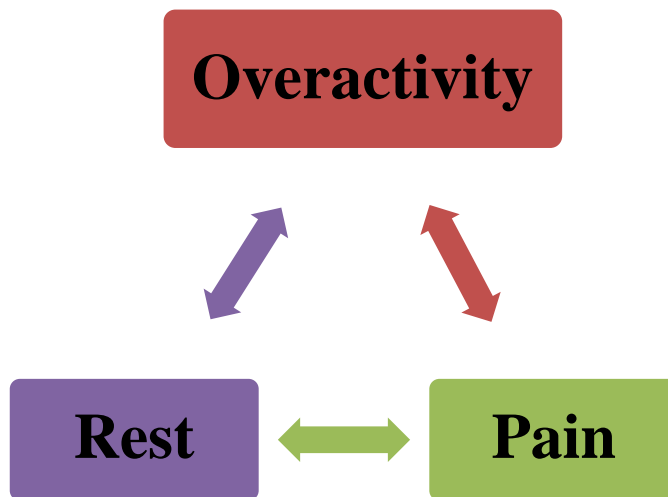# PACING ACTIVITIES

Some people are prone to 'pushing through' pain in the name of accomplishing a task and will not stop until it is complete, while others may be preoccupied with fears about harming themselves and avoid activity altogether. Sometimes those with chronic pain use a 'good pain day' when they are feeling better to try and complete one or more rigorous activities that have fallen by the wayside. The next day, they wake up with increased pain levels and rest for a day or more to recover. This **Overactivity Cycle** may happen on a recurring basis and can lead to negative consequences such as increased stress and anxiety, decreased efficiency, lowered self-esteem, and avoidance of any activity.

Overactivity

Rest ⟷ **Pain**

Engaging in a moderate, safe level of activity on a regular basis is how to avoid this cycle. Using the skill of pacing, where time is the guide for activity engagement, can be a helpful strategy. Pacing is about balancing activities, planning ahead, and working 'smarter not harder.'

HOW TO PACE

Estimate how long you can safely do one of your regular activities (e.g., yardwork, dishes) without causing a severe pain flare and set that minus one minute as your "active" goal time for the activity. Approximate the amount of "resting" time you will need in order to safely resume activity or continue your day.

Remember:
- Approximated times may need to be adjusted after pacing begins
- Stick to time-based pacing goals whether you are having a 'good' or a 'bad' pain day to avoid the crash-burn/over-activity cycle or the avoidance/inactivity cycle – moderation is the key

- Spread out activities during the week and be reasonable with the schedule so you can succeed

Use the table below to record how you pace activities this week. Use the sample as your guide, where each period of activity and rest equals one cycle. In the examples provided, **10 : 15 (1)** indicates *working for 10* minutes, *resting for 15* minutes for *one cycle* of pacing.

	Sample	Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3
Activity	Rake leaves			
Active Goal	10 minutes			
Rest Goal	15 minutes			
Day 1	10 / 15 (1)			
Day 2	10 / 15 (2)			
Day 3	10 / 15 (3)			
Day 4	15 / 15 (1)			
Day 5	15 / 15 (2)			
Day 6	15 / 15 (3)			
Day 7	20 / 15 (2)			