

A Flare up management plan is designed to help you develop strategies for coping with flare-up pain, modify the strategies, and allow you to gain more control over fluctuations in pain. You are likely to have one or more flare-ups in this program and we want you to lessen your fear of these pain increases so that you can more effectively deal with the pain.

Definition of a Flare-Up: a major increase in your pain level. You may be aware of having a baseline level of pain, but occasionally it increases dramatically. For example, you usually have a 5 out of 10 but the pain is now a 9 out of ten. (0 =no pain & 10 =most intense pain possible) For some people this may mean needing to go to the ER.

We understand that you have pain all the time but any pain condition can fluctuate and the goal is to gain more control over the fluctuations. They are something you will need to plan for, and expect them to happen. Managing the intensity of the fluctuations will help you feel like you have control over your pain.

We want you to decrease flare-up fluctuations which occur in patterns of:

1. frequency (how often the flare up pain occurs in the day or week),
2. intensity (how strong the flare up pain sensation gets)
3. duration (how long the flare-up {increased pain sensation} lasts before it decreases to average intensity).

Finding ways to decrease the frequency, intensity, and duration allows you to gain control over your pain. When you use these strategies, you may experience the edge of the pain decreasing over time, but these strategies don't make the pain go away instantly. You are developing a way to better manage the pain, stay active, and gain relief over time. Remember most medications take 30 minutes to an hour to have an effect and these strategies, after you practice them and become good at using them, will allow you to have an almost instant effect on your pain and enable you to remain active.

You should be able to accomplish these strategies on your own without another person helping. Consequently, the strategies should be practiced independently of others. You can go to other options later but this program focuses on improving what you can do on your own.

To actually see the progress in controlling Frequency/Intensity/Duration you would need to repeat a week (like in the movie "Groundhog Day"). Since this is unrealistic, it may seem as though you are not noticing changes. But don't get discouraged. These techniques will result in progress over time (after a month you will notice a decrease in how often, how strong and how long the flare up pain occurs).

The flare-up management plan relies on two strategies:

- 1) Identification of *Warning Signs* of future flare-ups (possible ways of preventing the flare-up)
- 2) Strategies to prepare for or deal with flare-ups

You need to identify either past flare-up strategies or try new flare-up strategies when you experience flare-up pain in the program and the future. The goal is to have several effective flare-up strategies that allow you to cope with flare-up pain by the end of the six weeks. Expect some of these strategies to be more helpful than others. You will be able to modify your plan weekly after trying several of these strategies.

You will likely have pain flare-ups while you are here and after you leave here. We want you to be prepared for this possibility. Completing the forms while in the program is important. This allows you 1) to be ready, and not have to problem solve when in a flare up (most people can't concentrate or want to do this), and 2) to test what works through documentation.

Try as many strategies as possible and change options while in the program. This is a learning experience in a controlled environment. Your reaction to the flare-up will make the biggest difference. Learning to control that, versus actually controlling the pain, will be the biggest challenge, and one of the most important ways for you to handle a flare-up. We refer to this as “responding” instead of “reacting.”

This 1st space is for documentation of warning signs or cues that you noticed when your flare-up pain is occurring or just beginning. These warning signs help you to begin early flare-up management before the pain gets worse and possibly eliminate the pain from progressing to a flare-up. These warning signs could be physical sensations, emotions, behaviors (doing certain activities), or thoughts.

Now look at Flare-Up Strategies that have worked in the past or could possibly work in the future to change the frequency, duration, and intensity of the flare-up pain. We want you to try these flare up strategies throughout the program to prevent flare up pain and to help when you experience flare up pain.

Warning Signs of a Flare-up

*(Physical, Thinking, Emotional, Events/situations (ex.- stress), Behaviors)

My Personal Strategies to Manage Flare Up Pain

(Write down your personal strategies from the other side)

Prevention

When in Flare up

1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.

Flare-up Pain Management Suggestions

1. Relaxation techniques on own with or without a tape (define if it is progressive muscle relaxation, autogenic training, diaphragmatic breathing, imagery etc.)
2. Biofeedback- on your own
3. Stretches (use ideas developed in PT and OT)
4. Pacing
5. Laughing
6. Body Mechanics
7. Physical therapy with foam roll
8. Exercises
9. Tape of relaxing scenery sounds (wind in trees, ocean, etc.)
10. Distraction (doing an activity that pulls your attention away from the pain; e.g., throwing a ball, typing, solitaire, games....)
11. Therapy ball
12. TENS Unit
13. Electrostimulation
14. Self-hypnosis
15. Spiritual time (prayer, meditation, etc.)
16. Talking to peer
17. Enjoy a hobby (define an activity for yourself)
18. Read something enjoyable
19. Write in a journal
20. Walk
21. Listen to favorite music
22. Attend to your posture
- 23 Herbal ice/ heat
24. Relief posture
25. Self-supportive statements
26. Thought log
27. Repeat inspirational statements
28. Ice
29. Heat
30. Warm bath/shower
31. Relaxation in an isolated environment

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO MANAGE YOUR PAIN BY YOURSELF

Try This...

Stress management	TENS unit
Pelvic tilt	herbal ice
Stop using shoulder straps on purse	checking in
Pace your activity	diaphragmatic breathing
Notice tense & tight muscles and relax	zostrix
Avoid high heels and cowboy boots	relaxation
Stretches done while sitting at a desk chair	positive attitude
Don't carry wallet in back pocket	correct your posture
Do your stretches daily	stretches while standing
Feldenkrais roll	assertive communication
Avoid caffeine	specific stretches taught to you by the pt
Walking	do something you enjoy
Visualization	pause and think, laugh
Avoid narcotics	healthy sleep patterns
Stop or cut down on smoking	problem solving
Meditation	purposeful activity
Seek healthy relationships	restorative posture
Do cardiovascular exercises	back knobble/tennis ball
Good nutrition	lose weight
Hypnosis	