

MOVEMENT

Movement can be a form of medicine for people with pain. Finding the right type of movement that works for you can take as much time as finding the right medication. Similarly, when you use movement as therapy, the number of times in a day and the amount of time spent moving both matter. You don't have to rely on the same activities every day; trying out new types of movement is encouraged! Whether you're dancing to the radio while working off stiffness in the morning, cleaning the house or walking the dog, any activity can contribute to improved pain management.

A good movement plan should include a balance of 3-4 main types of exercise:

- 'Good for your health' exercise (e.g., walking, cycling, swimming)
- Relaxation, mindful movement and stretching (e.g., yoga, tai chi, or Feldenkrais)
- Strength and conditioning to build your muscles
- Balance and agility

It's better to break up your movements throughout the day rather than to do them in one longer session (for example, walk for 10-minutes three times per day instead of walking 30 minutes at once).

OVERCOMING MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL BARRIERS TO EXERCISE

- Try not to focus on your mobility or pain condition. Instead of worrying about what you can't do, concentrate on finding activities you enjoy.
- Try new activities – you may be surprised by which ones you enjoy.
- Reward yourself when you make an effort to exercise!

WHAT IF IT HURTS WHEN I MOVE?

- Sometimes pain can get in the way of movement and exercise. We may respond to pain by:
- Stopping moving ('underdoing').
- Moving differently ('tensing up').
- Moving excessively ('overdoing').
- Find your baseline – the amount of activity you can do without increasing pain. Be conservative when starting out with any new movement.
- Move to the "edge" of pain or the sensation of muscular stretch/fatigue.
- Maintain calm, even breathing, keep body tension low, and monitor pain without reacting negatively.

- Challenge yourself and build slowly; increasing your movement by a few minutes or 5-10% more per week is sufficient!

IF YOU WANT TO TRY SOMETHING NEW, HERE'S HOW TO START

- Start with an activity you enjoy and keep your pace and your goals manageable.
- Make movement part of your daily life. Plan to exercise each day or have this as a goal.
- Stick with it!
- Write down your reasons for exercising and a list of goals and post them somewhere visible.
- Join a group and exercise with friends – group exercise naturally enhances motivation!
- Expect ups and downs. Don't be discouraged if you need to skip a few days or even a few weeks. It happens. Just get started again and slowly build up to your old momentum.

RESOURCES

- [Pain BC's Gentle Movement @ Home series: Guided movement for people in pain](#)
- [LivePlanBe section on mind-body therapies and techniques](#)