

Pain exacerbation plan:

Pain exacerbations are common and normal. They usually relate to a combination of factors that result in your spinal structures being more sensitive. Although the levels of pain can be severe they are rarely linked to serious injury or tissue damage. This is like a severe headache triggered by a period of stress, tiredness and inactivity.

Unless you have had a traumatic injury or have lost sensation and power in your leg and or are have trouble urinating, the key thing is to first **understand the triggers** and then **control your response to the pain.** ¹

Recent research has identified that common triggers may include the following:

1. Identify the triggers for pain exacerbation:

- a. Fatigue / lack of sleep
- b. Stress
- c. Negative emotions (feeling down / worries)
- d. Inactivity
- e. Spinal loading beyond level of conditioning
- f. Other _____

2. Plan of action:

- a. Don't panic...pain doesn't mean you are damaged (unless you have has a traumatic injury)
- b. Keep a positive mindset....it will get better
- c. Identify the triggers and address them
- d. Relax – breathing techniques...slow relaxed breathing
- e. Maintain gentle relaxed movements
- f. Exercise.....gentle activity if painful
- g. Work...going to work is an excellent distractor
- h. Other _____

3. Unhelpful responses:

- a. Panic
- b. Tense up
- c. Bed rest
- d. Sick leave
- e. Call the ambulance
- f. Get a scan
- g. Other _____