



**Royal Devon  
University Healthcare**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# **Session 2: The Foundations of Activity Management**



## Reflections on activity diaries

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Having completed an activity diary, and made a note of which activities fall into each energy demand category, you can identify changes you may wish to make.

<b>High</b>	<b>Activity:</b> Socialising  Last week met a friend in the morning for a two hour walk, with lunch.	<b>Example change:</b>  Agree to meet a friend for coffee at a garden centre for one hour.
<b>Low</b>	<b>Activity:</b> Computer activities  Become distracted whilst browsing and spent three hours online.	<b>Example change:</b>  Schedule three x 30-minute sessions. Set a timer to prompt a safe stopping point.
<b>Rest</b>	<b>Activity:</b> Meditation App  Meditate once before bed, to help with sleep.	<b>Example change:</b>  Use Pillars of Rest analogy to plan in three or four effective rests each day.

## **Managing energy levels**

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The demands on our energy can be positive and negative and come from lots of different sources, such as family, work / study, running a house etc. They can also come from the pressure of trying to meet our own expectations or standards.

## **Activity management strategies**

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### **The 3 Ps - Plan, Pace and Prioritise**

Learning to plan, pace and prioritise your activities will help you to conserve, and better balance, your energy levels.

#### **1. Plan**

Having identified the activities you normally do on a regular basis, it can be helpful to plan and schedule these differently for better energy conservation and management.

#### **Top tips for planning:**

- Consider using an activity diary to help you plan and schedule.
- Think about developing routines.
- Spread activities and rest breaks out across the day.
- Think about where you keep regularly used items (e.g. downstairs or upstairs).
- Consider equipment to reduce effort (e.g. sitting to clean teeth or when ironing, arranging an online food delivery).
- Change the time of an activity (e.g. showering in the evening).
- Scheduling in rest breaks between high demand activities (such as laundry and DIY).
- Plan in enjoyable activities.

## 2. Pace

Evidence suggests that pacing helps with managing your energy when doing an activity. For example, climb a few stairs, rest for 30 seconds and repeat, rather than climbing all the stairs at once.

### Top tips for pacing:

- Avoid multi-tasking.
- Give yourself permission to slow down.
- Break activities into smaller chunks.
- Alternate between physical, cognitive and emotional activities.
- Spread out high demand activities over the day / week / month.
- Be mindful of 'pushing through' - stop, pause and rest during and in-between activities.



### 3. Prioritise

Make a list of tasks for the day / week / month and use the 4 Ds below to help you with prioritisation.

#### The 4 Ds

- **Do it** – Can I do it differently? Consider your environment / posture / timings.
- **Delay it** – Does it all need to be done now?
- **Delegate it** - Does it need to be done by me?
- **Ditch it** – Does it need to be done at all?

#### Top tips for prioritising:

- Be kind to yourself.
- Be aware of not trying to do everything.
- Create a balance of activities you need and want to do.
- Remember the importance of rest and enjoyable activities.

#### Practical tips for using the 3 Ps

Showering		
Plan	Pace	Prioritise (4 Ds)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Open an inside door for good ventilation.</li><li>• Use long-handled equipment.</li><li>• Use equipment to help you get in / out of the bath or shower, such as a grab rail.</li><li>• Complete at a different time of day (e.g. evening before going to bed).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allow plenty of time and stop to rest regularly.</li><li>• Sit in the shower, if possible.</li><li>• Rest in a dressing gown or large towel, rather than drying yourself.</li><li>• Sit to wash your face, brush your teeth and dry your hair.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is bathing an activity you enjoy and are willing to spend a lot of energy on?</li><li>• Is a daily bath or shower necessary?</li><li>• Could you have a strip wash at the sink, or use wipes instead?</li></ul>

Cooking		
Plan	Pace	Prioritise (4 Ds)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cook large amounts and refrigerate or freeze extra portions.</li> <li>• Get everything you need ready before you start.</li> <li>• Keep things that are used together in the same part of the kitchen.</li> <li>• Cook simple meals.</li> <li>• Online shopping.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spread the preparation throughout the day.</li> <li>• Sit whilst preparing or stirring food.</li> <li>• Take rests during and after cooking.</li> <li>• Use a trolley to move items around the kitchen.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buy pre-prepared vegetables.</li> <li>• Buy frozen ready meals.</li> <li>• Delegate tasks.</li> <li>• Experiment with preparing and eating your main meal at lunchtime.</li> </ul>

Shopping		
Plan	Pace	Prioritise (4 Ds)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a list with similar items together, so you walk around the shop less.</li> <li>• Shop at quieter times.</li> <li>• Avoid large / deep trolleys to reduce bending when putting in / removing items.</li> <li>• Pack items together that go in the fridge / freeze or the same cupboard, so it's easier to unpack.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a rest when you get to the shop.</li> <li>• Take your time collecting your items.</li> <li>• Spread heavy items across your shopping bags.</li> <li>• Use a trolley to push / pull your shopping home, rather than carrying a bag.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can family or a friend help you with the shopping?</li> <li>• Can you do online shopping?</li> <li>• Can you shop on a day when you don't have other high demand tasks to do?</li> </ul>

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## The Jug of Life analogy

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Chronic fatigue can fluctuate and you may find the energy demand for the same activities can vary from day to day.

When living with chronic fatigue people often focus on the essential activities or tasks they feel they **have** to do. Engagement in enjoyable activities is often not prioritised, even though these activities may help conserve and top up our energy.

A helpful way to think about your energy supply is the '**Jug of Life**' analogy.

Imagine that the liquid in the jug is your energy supply. Every day you give different amounts of your energy to all the activities that your body and mind have to do.



## Reflections for session 2

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1. What information from Session 2 (The Foundations of Activity Management) did you find most useful?
2. Have a go at applying the 3Ps to an activity of your choice.

Activity:		
Plan	Pace	Prioritise (4 Ds)

3. Consider your own Jug of Life:

**Demands on  
Energy Supply**

**Improving  
Energy Supply**

