

Footstep 10

Managing setbacks

Setbacks are common in managing pain and having a plan in place to manage them is key. It is important to prepare patients for this, manage their expectations and discourage 'all-or-nothing' thinking.

Setbacks can arise for no obvious reason, or they may relate to tiredness, pacing problems, a change in mood or a change in medication. Using the footsteps for living well with pain may reduce the chance and frequency of setbacks that the

patient experiences. You can also encourage the patient to make a setback plan. This is probably best done at a time when things are going well.

Action to take

Share the setback plan guide *Maintaining progress and managing setbacks* (see below) for the person to explore and shape for themselves.

Here are some examples of things that your patient could include in their plan:

- **Reducing activity levels (though not stopping) and introducing more regular small breaks**
- **Avoid complete rest – this results in about 1% loss of**

muscle strength each day! So, doing something is still better than nothing

- **Pace more but keep active**
- **Practice relaxation techniques**
- **Ask for help from others**
- **Challenge negative thoughts**
- **Plan more small treats and a reward when the setback is over**

Resources for your patient

Maintaining progress and managing setbacks – leaflet

A useful leaflet for patients to learn more about setbacks, identify their triggers and develop an effective setback plan.
From *Live Well with Pain*

https://editorhttps://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/uploads-7e3kk3/12506/maintaining_progress_and_managing_setbacks.de08dc64d7c6.pdf/oleon.com/publication/127124/pages/1401460

Online resources

Health Talk is a valuable resource where people share helpful ways of living with long term health conditions:

<https://www.healthtalk.org/>

Key points

- **Setbacks are likely to occur but can pass**
- **Working through the other footsteps can reduce the risk of setbacks**
- **It is important to encourage patients to plan for setbacks**

Get the resources

All the booklets and leaflets described in this sheet can be downloaded and printed from the online version of Ten Footsteps: www.resources.livewellwithpain.co.uk/10-footsteps