



Be Pain Smart – Fatigue

The ‘Boom and bust cycle’ worksheet

Does the ‘Boom and bust cycle’ feel familiar to you? Think about the last time you went through a ‘Boom and bust cycle’ and fill in the sections below.

Here is an example from Franco – he had a brain injury five years ago and has chronic back and shoulder pain.

What happened during the boom – the good days? Think about what you could and could not do and how you felt.

*I was able to mow the back and front yards. It was such a relief to get these jobs done.
I did not need to rest at all, and I was also able to take the kids to the park for over an hour.
I felt great – my wife was so happy as well.*

What happened during the bust period – the bad days? Think about what you could and could not do and how you felt.

*The next day I could barely move and stayed in bed most of the day. I was so down and angry.
I got really cranky, yelled at the kids and had a fight with my wife. I could not understand why my pain was worse today and I could not get anything else done all day.
I had to take extra pain medication and now I might not have enough to get me through next month.*



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What could you have done differently?

I guess it was a mistake to do so much in one day. It would have been better if I had stuck with my pacing plan.

Even though it felt great getting those jobs done, I felt even worse over the next few days and this caused a problem with my family.

What would happen over time if you stuck with the 'Boom and bust cycle'? What would that mean for how you manage your pain?

Even though it feels great on those 'good days', I know that if I keep going with the 'boom and bust cycle' in the long run, it will only make my pain worse.

Also, on the 'bad days' I cannot do much at all. I know if this continues, I will be able to do less, with more pain.

I worry that the frustration I get on the 'bad days' will cause problems with my wife and kids.



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What would happen over time if you stopped the ‘Boom and bust cycle’? What would that mean for how you manage your pain?

It would be hard to do this because it is really tempting to do more on the ‘good days’, but I know that if I keep to my pacing plan, my days would be more consistent, and I would be able to build my activity levels and my strength.

At the start I would get a bit frustrated, but I know over time I would be less stressed and anxious, and more in control of my pain. It is worth giving it a try for a few months to see it works.

Remember, consistency is the key – build slowly and you will gain momentum.



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Think about the last time you went through a 'Boom and bust cycle' and fill in the sections below.

What happened during the boom – the good days? Write down what you could and could not do and how you felt.

What happened during the bust period – the bad days? Write down what you could and could not do and how you felt.



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Write down what could you have done differently?

Write down what would happen over time if you stuck with the 'Boom and bust cycle'?
What would that mean for how you manage your pain?



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Write down what would happen over time if you stopped the ‘Boom and bust cycle’?
 What would that mean for how you manage your pain?