



Be Pain Smart – Fatigue

‘Doing more’

The best thing you can do to help your mood is to get active. On the days when you do feel a bit better, try to give something a go. There is a lot you can do to start feeling better.

Often when you have pain and a brain injury, you do not feel like doing much. This could be because you cannot do the things you used to do, or your pain is too hard to manage. It might also be because you feel down, tired, fatigued, less interested in things and less able to enjoy activities.

After feeling like this for a while, you might stop doing everyday tasks, stop caring about how you look, stop tidying up and even stop leaving the house and over time, doing simple things can feel too much.

Luckily there is a lot you can do to change this and start feeling better.

Get active

The best thing you can do to help your mood is to get active. There is a lot of research that shows that you can improve your mood and reduce tiredness when you do more enjoyable activities. Getting more active might seem like the opposite of what you want to do when you are feeling tired, down or in pain, but it works!

More energy

Just doing a small activity can give you energy. You might feel too tired to do anything, but the tiredness from fatigue is different from normal tiredness. When you are feeling this way, resting does not give you energy, but ‘doing more’ does over time.

Start small

Make sure that you start off small. You do not need to pack your day full of things. Start with one small thing that you can do consistently, then build this up slowly over time.



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Add in rest breaks

When you are starting to do more, add in plenty of rest breaks. Add them in before you normally get tired or your pain gets worse, so you can keep your energy levels up and your pain down. Check out the '[Pacing](#)' tool section for more tips on how to do this.

Make a plan

Make a plan and then just do it. Motivation is helpful but it comes and goes, and it is often hard when you are feeling tired and in pain. Instead, build up some **momentum** – start by planning just a small part of your day – maybe five minutes, and build up slowly over time. By creating and carrying out a 'Doing more' plan, your brain will want to do the things you planned, and it will not be so hard to get started – this is how momentum builds.

Don't wait for motivation to come, you need to build momentum to get better.

Now you need to make your own plan to do more

My plan to do more

When you are making your plan, there are some types of activities that you should try to include.

Care for yourself

Have you stopped caring about how you look or cleaning up around the house? These are not the most fun things to do, but when you do them, you feel better. It is a good idea to put time into taking care of yourself. Make sure you have a shower every day, get on top of the housework and get a regular daily routine.

Move more

It can be hard to get enough exercise when you have chronic pain but some exercise, even a simple 5-10 minute walk can boost your mood and energy. If you pace your activity level, this will not make your pain worse. Remember, over time, a little bit of exercise done often is better than too much or too little exercise. Check out the '[Getting more active](#)' tool for ideas.



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Add some fun

You also need to put some fun into your plan. Think of the things you enjoy doing now and those that you did before. Are there a few things you could add into your plan now? You might not feel like doing these things at the start, but give yourself a chance. Many people find that if they start doing something, even for a few minutes, they enjoy it more than they first thought. Look at the [‘Getting back into leisure’](#) tool for more tips.

Make it meaningful

You need more than just fun things to really start to feel better. You also need to do some activities that give you a sense of purpose or that you are good at. This will be different for everyone, so find something that is meaningful to you. It can be small things like making your bed, or something bigger like starting an online course or a DIY project. Find out more in the [‘Changing roles’](#) tool.

My plan to do more

For each activity, pick a few things you could do each week do on a regular basis. Use your own or those from the activity list at the end. Here is an example.

CARING FOR YOURSELF	MOVING MORE	FUN	MEANINGFUL
Have a shower	Go for a walk	Listen to music	Gardening
Make my bed	Have a swim	Play video game	Volunteer work
Tidy up the kitchen	Do my physiotherapy program	Go fishing	Do a DIY project
Take a bath	Do some yoga/tai chi	Meet up with friends	Cook a meal or new recipe
Clean up my room	Taking my dog to the park	Go to the movies	Do a craft project





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Pick one thing from each category that you could try over the next week. Think about when you will do these activities (the day and time). Put this into your weekly activity plan below.

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?	WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO DO IT? DAY(S) AND TIME(S)	RATING AFTER	COMMENTS
Caring for yourself 	Make my bed.	I will do this each morning as soon as I get out of bed.	5	
Moving more 	Do my physiotherapy program.	After lunch at about 2pm I will do my exercises for 15 minutes.	6	My plan takes about 25 minutes to do, but I will only do 15 minutes to start with and build up over time.
Fun 	Go to the movies.	I will meet my friend, Martin and watch a movie.	7	I will need to move after 35 minutes.
Meaning 	I will get out into the garden a few times this week.	I will weed the garden beds for just 10 minutes at 10am on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.	8	
Other 	My physiotherapist taught me a few Tai Chi moves to help stretch my back and shoulders.	I will try these out at 10am on Tuesday and Thursday.	7	All up the moves only take 10 minutes.

After you complete each activity, rate how much you enjoyed it or how good it felt after you did it. This will help to train your brain to remember how much you enjoyed the activity.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 None Mild Moderate High Very high

Remember to start out small and build up slowly over time.





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Keep building on your plan each week. You can add more activities or do the same ones for longer. Now it is your turn to have a go.

My plan to do more

For each of the activity areas below, pick a few things you could do each week. Write your own, or choose from the activity list at the end, in the space below.

CARING FOR YOURSELF	MOVING MORE	FUN	MEANINGFUL
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Pick one thing from each category that you could try over the next week. Think about when you will do these activities (the day and time). Put this into your weekly activity plan below.

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Caring for yourself 				
Moving more 				
Fun 				
Meaning 				
Other 				

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0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 None Mild Moderate High Very high





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Potential activity list

- Putting up a framed picture or artwork
- Entertaining
- Riding a motorbike
- Wine tasting
- Going to the planetarium or observatory
- Birdwatching
- Going on a picnic
- Having a warm drink
- Massaging hand cream into your hands
- Fantasising about the future
- Laughing
- Exercising
- Clearing your email inbox
- Planting a terrarium
- Playing lawn games (e.g. bowls, croquet, bocce)
- Going to a party
- Looking at photos
- Going on a city tour
- Going to an agricultural show
- Jogging
- Walking
- Going to home opens
- Researching a topic of interest
- Going to the beach
- Putting moisturising cream on your face/body
- Volunteering for a cause you support
- Smelling a flower
- Opening the curtains and blinds to let light in
- Going to the zoo or aquarium
- Going for a long drive
- Doing jigsaw puzzles
- Donating old clothes or items to charity
- Taking a class (e.g. cooking, improvisation, acting, art)
- Soaking in the bathtub
- Learning a magic trick
- Talking on the phone
- Listening to a podcast or radio show
- Walking around your city and noticing architecture of buildings
- Doing arts and crafts
- Going on a ghost tour
- Sketching, painting
- Mowing the lawn
- Going horseback riding
- Doing the dishes
- Sitting outside and listening to birds sing
- Spending time alone
- Going to a free public lecture
- Travelling to national parks
- Going to a fair or fete
- Playing cards
- Playing soccer
- Volunteering at an animal shelter
- Re-watching a favourite movie
- Gardening
- Going camping
- Playing volleyball
- Going bike riding
- Entering a competition
- Doing crossword puzzles
- Patting or cuddling your pet
- Writing down a list of things you are grateful for
- Cooking a special meal
- Having a treatment at a day spa (e.g. facial)



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- Putting extra effort into your appearance
- Playing golf
- Doing a favour for someone
- Building a bird house or feeder
- Looking at pictures of beautiful scenery
- Having family get-togethers
- Listening to music
- Learning a new language
- Taking a free online class
- Working
- Washing my hair
- Singing around the house
- Creatively reusing old items
- Going sailing
- Stretching muscles
- Maintaining a musical instrument (e.g. restringing guitar)
- Playing tennis or badminton
- Buying clothes
- Going to the botanic gardens
- Going to a scenic spot and enjoying the view
- Going to the speedway
- Snuggling up with a soft blanket
- Listening to an audiobook
- Going to see live stand-up comedy
- Redecorating
- Maintaining an aquarium
- Playing frisbee
- Teaching a special skill to someone else (e.g. knitting, woodworking, painting, language)
- Playing chess (with a friend or at a local club)
- Going to a games arcade
- Jumping on a trampoline
- Sending a text message to a friend
- Going fishing
- Doodling
- Putting a vase of fresh flowers in your house
- Participating in a protest you support
- Going to a movie
- Surfing, bodyboarding or stand up paddle boarding
- Baking bread
- Walking barefoot on soft grass
- Watching a movie marathon
- Sending a loved one a card in the mail
- Being physically intimate with someone you want to be close to
- Going to karaoke
- Wearing an outfit that makes me feel good
- Having a video call with someone who lives far away
- Going to a quiz or trivia night
- Spending time in nature
- Watching the clouds drift by
- Debating
- Painting my nails
- Going ice skating, roller skating/blading
- Photography
- Feeding birds
- Spending an evening with good friends
- Making jams or preserves
- Going out to dinner
- Buying gifts
- Having a political discussion
- Repairing things around the house
- Washing your car
- Watching TV, videos
- Seeing a movie at the drive-in or outdoor cinema



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- Baking something to share with others (e.g. family, neighbours, friends, work colleagues)
- Taking a sauna, spa or a steam bath
- Arranging flowers
- Organising your wardrobe
- Playing musical instruments
- Going to the ballet or opera
- Lighting scented candles, oils or incense
- Hobbies (stamp collecting, model building, etc.)
- Talking to an older relative and asking them questions about their life
- Listening to classical music
- Abseiling
- Watching funny videos on YouTube
- Doing something religious or spiritual (e.g. going to church, praying)
- Lying in the sun
- Making your bed with fresh sheets
- Lifting weights
- Early morning coffee and newspaper
- Planning a themed party (e.g. costume, murder mystery)
- Wearing comfortable clothes
- Acting
- Going swimming
- De-cluttering
- Going rock climbing
- Meditating
- Going on a ride at a theme park or fair
- Skipping/jumping rope
- Playing a game on your phone or computer
- Going to the gym
- Working on your car or bicycle
- Juggling or learning to juggle
- Contacting an old school friend
- Calligraphy
- Sleeping
- Driving
- Going crabbing
- Playing with my pets
- Cooking some meals to freeze for later
- Going kayaking, canoeing or white-water rafting
- Listening to the radio
- Doing Sudoku
- Planting vegetables or flowers
- Walks on the riverfront/foreshore
- Playing pool or billiards
- Getting an indoor plant
- Surfing the internet
- Doing embroidery, cross stitching
- Browsing a hardware store
- Donating blood
- Buying books
- Meditating
- Training your pet to do a new trick
- Planning a day's activities
- Borrowing books from the library
- Going to a Bingo night
- Playing ping pong/table tennis
- Having ice-cream
- Going on a hot air balloon ride
- Sightseeing
- Organising your work space
- Dangling your feet off a jetty



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- Writing (e.g. poems, articles, blog, books)
- Dancing in the dark
- Having an indoor picnic
- Reading classic literature
- Going on a date
- Going whale watching
- Putting on perfume or cologne
- Digging your toes in the sand
- Singing in the shower
- Reading magazines or newspapers
- Calling a friend
- Giving positive feedback about something (e.g. writing a letter or email about good service)
- Going snorkelling
- Going hiking, bush walking
- Reading fiction
- Meeting new people
- Doing 5 minutes of calm deep breathing
- Buying new stationery
- Turning off electronic devices for an hour (e.g. computer, phone, TV)
- Buying music (MP3s, CDs, records)
- Relaxing
- Going to the footy
- Going skiing
- Doing woodworking
- Planning a nice surprise for someone else
- Playing video games
- Waking up early, and getting ready at a leisurely pace
- Saying 'I love you'
- Making a playlist of upbeat songs
- Colouring in
- Playing laser tag or paintball
- Joining a community choir
- Doing a nagging task (e.g. making a phone call, scheduling an appointment, replying to an email)
- Taking a ferry ride
- Hitting golf balls at a driving range
- Shaping a bonsai plant
- Watching planes take off/land at the airport
- Planning your career
- Reading non-fiction
- Writing a song or composing music
- Taking your dog to the park
- Sending a handwritten letter
- Having a barbecue
- Sewing
- Dancing
- Having lunch with a friend
- Talking to or introducing myself to your neighbours
- Re-organise a room in your house
- Holding hands
- Going to a free art exhibition
- Making a 'to-do' list of tasks
- Travelling abroad, interstate or within the state
- Having quiet evenings
- Geocaching
- Holding a garage sale
- Browsing at a second-hand bookshop
- Test driving an expensive car
- Drawing a picture
- Refurbishing furniture
- Exchanging emails, chatting on the internet
- Napping in a hammock
- Skipping stones on the water



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- Doing ballet, jazz/tap dancing
- Archery
- Knitting/crocheting/quilting
- Visiting a parent/grandparent
- Making a gift for someone
- Having discussions with friends
- Trying a new recipe
- Pampering yourself at home (e.g. putting on a face mask)
- Watching your children play
- Watching kids play sport
- Making jewellery
- Reading poetry
- Going to the hills
- Getting/giving a massage
- Going for a walk in the local park
- Shooting hoops at the local basketball courts
- Collecting things (coins, shells, etc.)
- Flying kites
- Savouring a piece of fresh fruit
- Doing something from your 'to do' list
- Playing hockey
- Eating outside during your lunch break
- Floating on a pool lounge
- Taking yourself out for lunch
- Sitting at the beach or river and watching the movement of the water
- Using special items (e.g. fine china, silver cutlery, jewellery, clothes, souvenir mugs)
- Doing a DIY project (e.g. making homemade soap, making a mosaic)
- Taking care of your plants
- Going on a Segway tour
- Going to a public place and people watching
- Discussing books
- Going window shopping
- Watching boxing, wrestling
- Making a pot of tea
- Giving someone a genuine compliment
- Practising yoga, pilates
- Going to a community or school play
- Shaving
- Genuinely listening to others
- Participating in a clean-up (e.g. picking up litter at the beach or park)
- Eating fish and chips at the beach
- Checking social media
- Blowing bubbles
- Buying new furniture
- Watching a sunset or sunrise
- Star gazing
- Watching a funny TV show or movie
- Making pottery, or taking a pottery class
- Playing mini golf
- Recycling old items
- Going to a water park
- Practising karate, judo
- Boxing a punching bag
- Cleaning up a room
- Driving a go kart
- Daydreaming
- Learning about your family tree
- Telling a joke
- Picking berries at a farm
- Setting up a budget
- Writing a positive comment on a website/blog
- Finding a local men's shed.
- Getting a manicure or pedicure



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- Walking around the block
- Playing cricket
- Signing up for a fun run
- Scrapbooking
- Accepting an invitation
- Cooking an international cuisine
- Solving riddles
- Scuba diving
- Watching home videos
- Building a sandcastle
- Doing water aerobics
- Planning a holiday or short trip
- Watching fireworks
- Rearranging the furniture in your house
- Cheering for a sports team
- Origami
- Starting an old hobby
- Doing something nostalgic (e.g. eating a childhood treat, listening to music from a certain time in your life)
- Joining a club (e.g. film, book, sewing, etc.)
- Lighting candles
- Going bowling
- Going to museums, art galleries
- Reading comics
- Having coffee at a cafe
- Buying fresh food at the market
- Taking a road trip
- Watching a fireplace or campfire
- Whistling
- Playing darts
- Going to a flea market
- Working from home
- Buying a meal from a food truck or hawker's market and eating outdoors
- Operating a remote control car/plane
- Playing board games (e.g. Scrabble, Monopoly)
- Savouring a piece of chocolate
- Hunting for a bargain at an op shop, garage sale or auction
- Buying, selling stocks and shares
- Going to plays and concerts
- Making homemade pizza
- Watching your favourite TV show
- Beachcombing
- Dining out at a restaurant or café
- Harvesting home grown produce
- Exploring with a metal detector
- Giving someone a hug
- Planning a barbeque with friends
- Taking a holiday
- Going to the hairdresser or barber
- Swimming with dolphins
- Picking flowers
- Sandboarding
- Going to the beauty salon
- Going to the movies
- Cleaning up the garage or shed
- Buying yourself something nice
- Playing squash
- Eating something nourishing (e.g. chicken soup)
- Trying new hairstyles
- Combing or brushing your hair
- Writing diary/journal entries