

Week 9: Goal setting – making use of your time

Setting up goals to your daily routine or using a diary to plan your week in advance allows you to do more of the things you want to, in addition to the things that you have to do.

Persistent pain can affect lots of different aspects of your life. You may find that you have had to give up going places or doing things that you used to enjoy because you are afraid that this may make you feel worse. Also, it may be a little frightening to think about starting something new.

Goal setting is rather like pacing - you can use it to gradually build up the activities that you do. It's all about giving you some control back, rather than letting the pain take over.

A goal is something that you would like to achieve. It may be going to the cinema, walking the dog, or playing with your children or grandchildren. You could have all kinds of different goals, and they can be either short- or long-term.

There are four golden rules for setting goals:

1. The goal must be realistic.
2. It must be something you can measure.
3. It should be your own goal - don't let someone else pick it for you.
4. Don't be too ambitious to start with – pick something that's important to you, but not impossible. Look beyond your pain to what's important in your life.

The first step is to decide on your goal. Then think about all the things you need to do to achieve that goal. It might help to write all this down on a piece of paper. Say, for example, that your goal is to start driving your car again. There are lots of things involved in this:

1. Getting in and out of the car
2. Sitting in the driver's seat
3. Turning your head to look in the mirror
4. Twisting to put on your seat belt
5. Moving the pedals up and down
6. Leaning forward over the steering wheel
7. Pulling the handbrake on
8. Changing gear
9. Opening and closing the door

