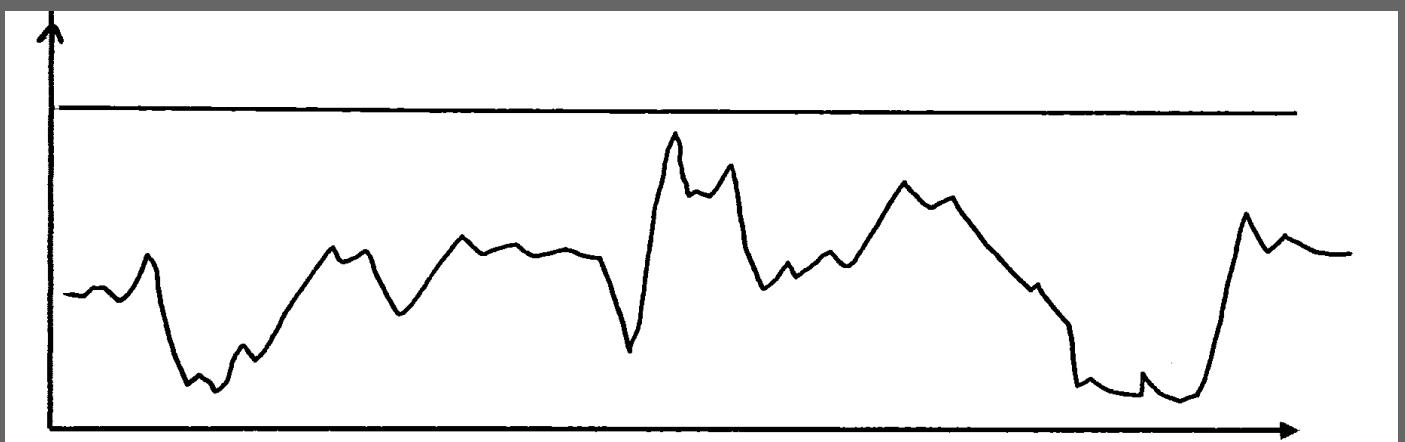


# Chapter 6

## PACING

### Activity and Energy Management



## **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, we expand on the idea that we thrive when we live in harmony with natural rhythms:-

**The Circadian**  
(our 24 hour wake-sleep cycle)  
**and the Ultradian**  
(our 2 hour activity-rest cycle).

We discuss the role of purposeful pacing -balancing our activity with rest- while respecting our current levels of energy. By avoiding "doing too much" and disciplining ourselves to "stick to the plan", we can actually enhance our energy levels.

**By pacing - by using energy in a purposeful way - we can "gain energy".**

## **WHAT IS PACING?**

Pacing is all about balancing mental, emotional and physical activity with periods of deep rest.

Pacing enhances our energy levels and brings about improvements in the way we feel.

## Pacing is Natural

You may recall from chapter 4 (Understanding Stress), that our bodies naturally „rev” themselves up and this motivates us to do things.

About every 90 minutes, our bodies settle down into a relaxed state for 20 minutes or so. If we’ve been busy, our minds start daydreaming and we lose concentration. Our bodies feel the need for a „rest” break!

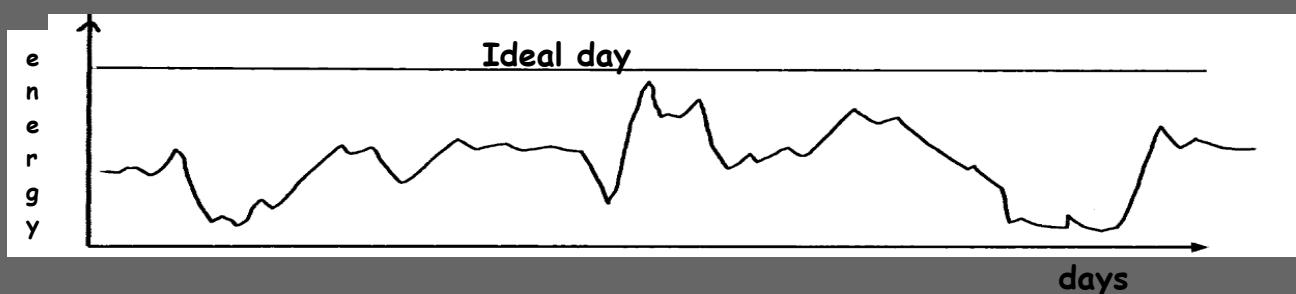
If we ignore this rhythm, stress accumulates in our systems.

If we observe this natural rhythm and respond

By planning our day accordingly,  
then we are PACING.

Even when we do follow our natural rhythms, we still have times when our energy levels are better than at other times. As we discussed in the first chapter, that’s life to some degree!

The only thing constant in life is Change.

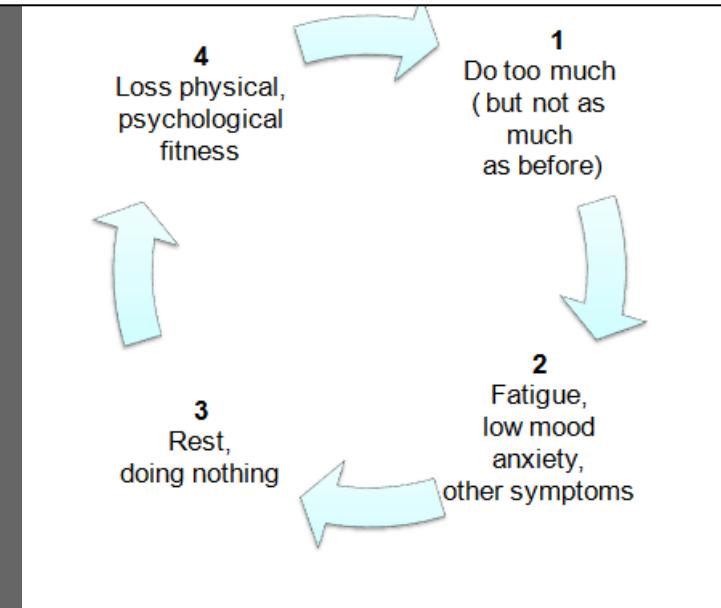


However, there are times when we can find ourselves in what is called the boom-bust cycle.

# Boom-Bust Cycle

or

## GOOD DAYS and BAD DAYS (apart from normal changes in how we feel)



**(1)**

On a good day, there is a tendency to take advantage and overdo things by trying to catch up.

This could be overdoing things either physically, mentally or emotionally.

**(2)**

This leads to feelings of exhaustion and a big dip in our ability to do anything on the next or following days.

**(3)**

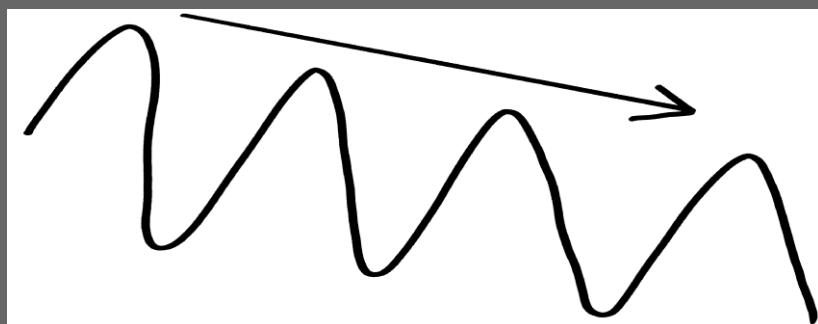
As we have periods where we do little or nothing -

**(4)**

- our physical and mental ability begins to decline.

On our next good day when we have recovered, we again do too much but never quite manage to do what we could before because - we have lost ability.

So  
We dip again, and if we continue this pattern  
we slide down

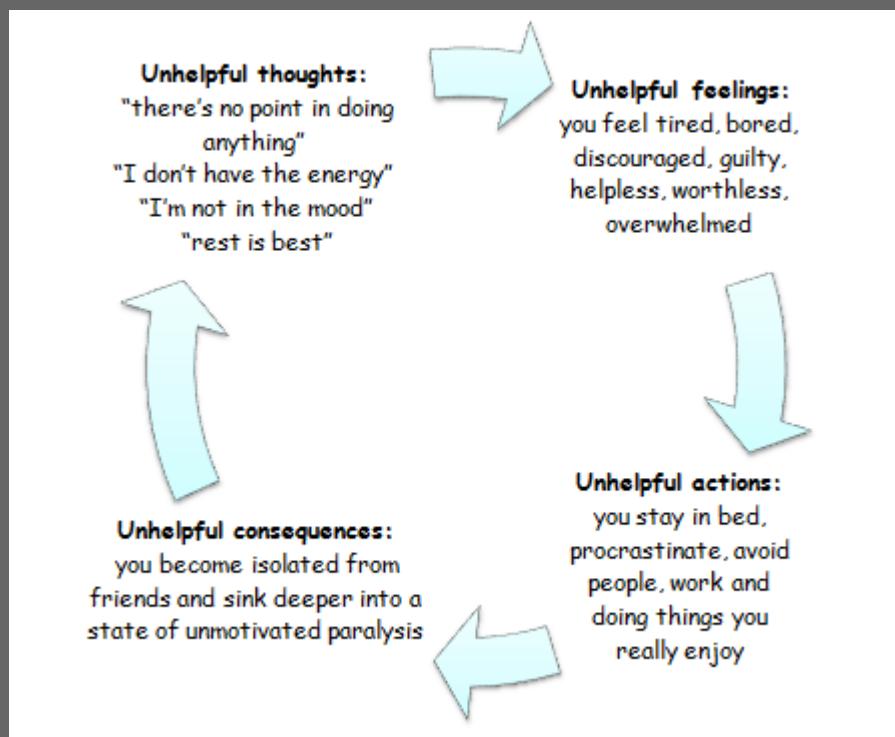


Prolonged periods of being caught up  
in the boom-bust cycle  
can lead to lethargy.

People may say to themselves,  
"What's the point in doing anything?"

This can result in them feeling bored and discouraged, and they may find themselves staying in bed, procrastinating, and gradually becoming more isolated from friends.

### Lethargy Cycle



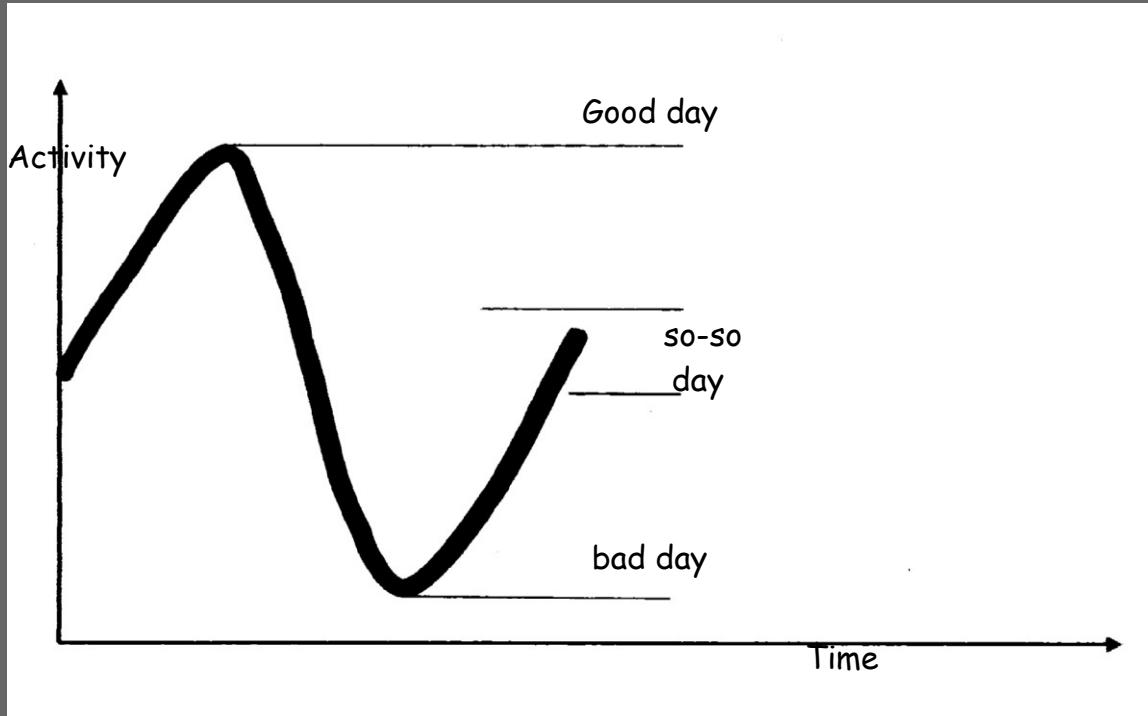
## Breaking the Boom-Bust Cycle with Pacing

**Pacing** yourself means working out what you can tolerate on **so-so days**

(in between a good day and a bad day)

and sticking to these levels of activity even on good days.

The idea is that by avoiding doing too much on a good day you prevent the bad days from happening.



This "so-so" activity level is your .....

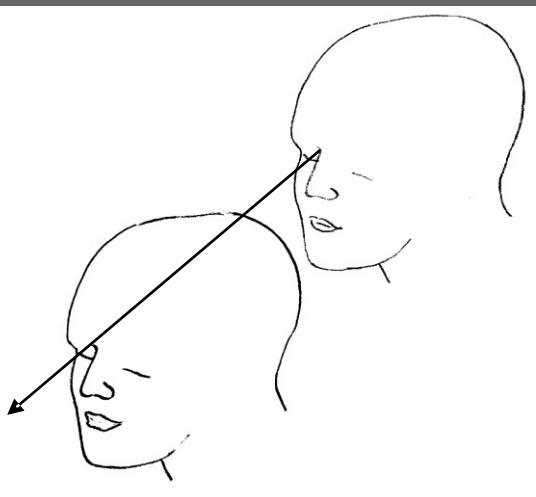
**BASELINE**



## How to find your Baseline

In chapter 5 on relaxation, we introduced the idea of becoming Mindful of being able to step back and notice.

### MINDFULNESS means



**Noticing** the natural fluctuations in our energy levels throughout the day.

**Noticing** the effect that physical, mental and emotional activity has on our body.

**Listening** to our body and

**Stepping Back** from our situation.

### Activity Diaries

Keeping an **activity diary** can help us to become **mindful** of the effects of our activities on the way we feel (on **symptoms** such as mood, pain or energy levels.)

There are many kinds of activity diary, and it is important to find one that suits you.

This is a tool which can be used over a period of time to work out your capabilities (physical, mental and/or emotional) so that you can then work out your baseline or „so-so“ activity level.

- a) Physical (what you do)
- b) Mental (how much you can concentrate)
- c) Emotional (how you feel).

## How to use an Activity Diary



Choose what you are going to notice.

Decide whether you are going to look at physical, mental or emotional activity in isolation, or at general activity (all of the above).

And then, decide whether you are going to measure pain, symptoms, mood or energy levels.

You can rate this on a scale of 0 - 10



## Example - Daily Activity Diary

Look at General activity, and measure energy - 10 high, 0 low

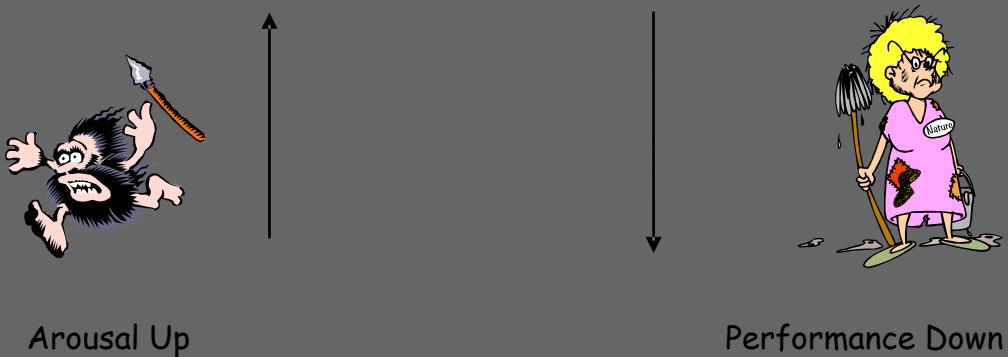
Time	Activity	Score
1-6am	Sleep	-
6-7	Sleep	-
7-8	Wake, stay in bed	4
8-9	up, breakfast, back to bed	4
9-10	up shower, dress	6
10-11	Housework - hoover all of house	2
11-12	Telephone (upsetting)	1
12-1	Friend visit - chat	3
1-2	Lunch with friend	2
2-3	Out shopping	2
3-4	Out shopping	2
4-5	Back home, make dinner	2
5-6	Eat with family	2
6-7	Bath	2
7-8	TV	2
8-9	TV	2
9-10	TV	2
10-11	TV	2
11-12	Bed, awake	2
12-1am	Sleep	-

# SO, WHAT WOULD I EXPECT TO NOTICE?

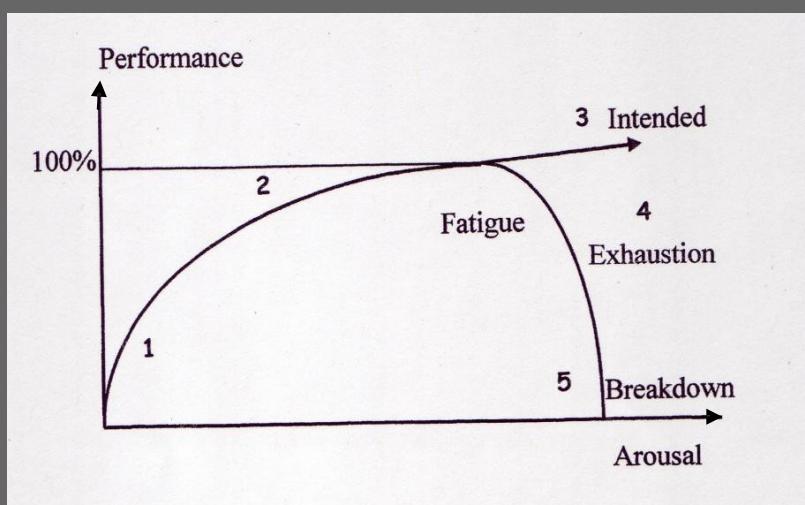
Much of what we do, think and feel has a powerful influence on our symptoms and energy levels.

## Pacing, Stress and Arousal

As stress and arousal levels increase beyond an optimal level, our physical, mental and emotional abilities reduce.



As shown in stage 4 in the Human Performance Curve



An important part of pacing then is  
**Regular Rest and Relaxation.**

**NOTE:** Anything that stimulates the brain either physically or mentally can be called activity.  
Watching TV, reading, doing a crossword and even having a cup of tea and a biscuit are activities.  
Relaxation should focus not just on resting the body but also on resting the mind.



**R and R**



### SO HOW DO I DO IT?

Learning anything new can feel strange and uncomfortable, but with practice it becomes easier.



You will be learning to change the habit of doing all or nothing.

# HOW TO PACE YOUR DAY

## (A flexible routine)

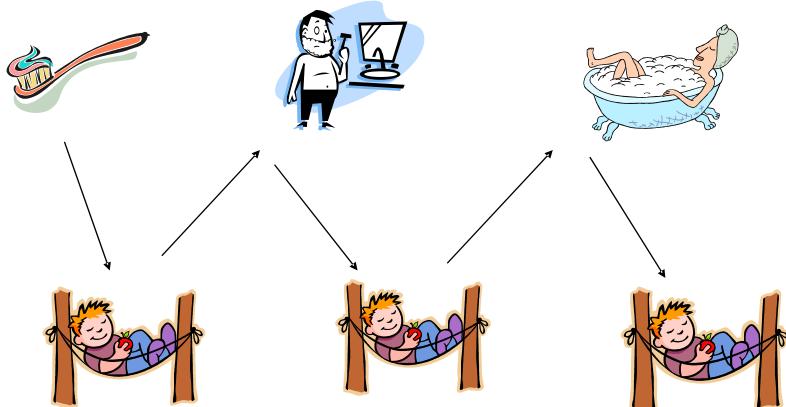
- **Develop a normal sleep pattern**  
Go to bed and rise at arranged times.
- **Control emotions**  
Stay in balance.
- **Plan activity level based on a „so-so“ day**  
not your best or your worst day.
- **Alternate Rest and Activity throughout the day**  
Alternate physical activities with mental activities.  
Alternate low-level and medium-level activities.
- **Break down high-energy activities**  
into achievable chunks.  
You don't have to complete your chores all in one go!
- **Develop consistent patterns of activity - mini routines**  
(eg morning and bedtime routines)  
Practise them throughout the day and enjoy some flexibility between routines.
- **Include pleasurable activities**  
(eg two relaxation sessions and a walk)
- **Quieten down in the evening**  
Prepare for sleep.



## Break down chores into achievable chunks

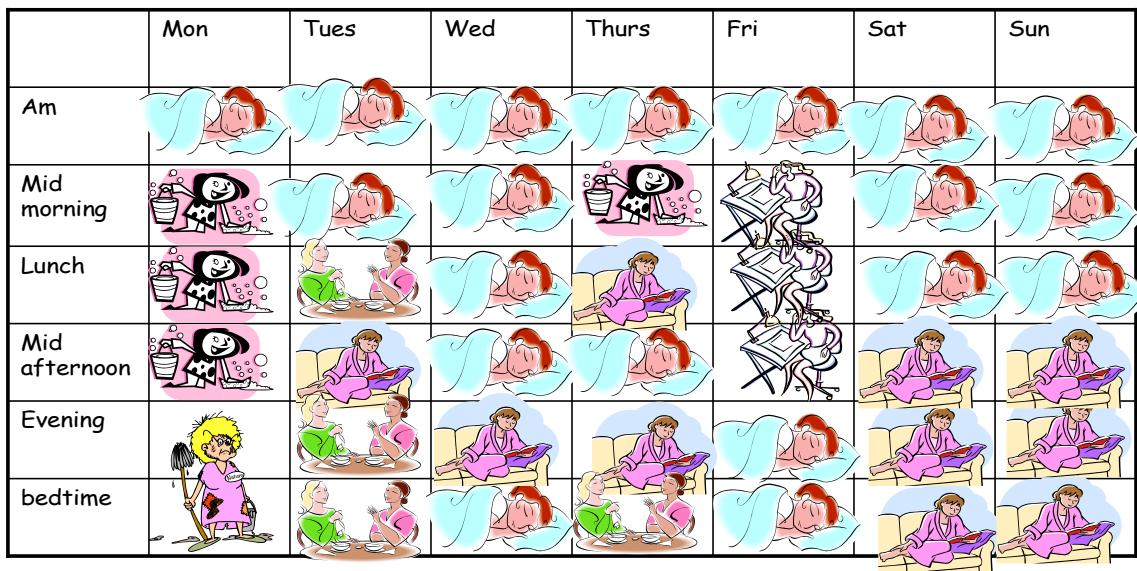


Take breaks in between typical daily routines –  
you don't have to get up, get washed, get dressed and eat breakfast  
all in one go!



## NOT Pacing is:-

### Doing what you feel



### Diary extract

- Monday** Did too much housework and was exhausted at night.
- Tuesday** Didn't sleep well, so I slept in. A friend called and I met her for lunch and came back exhausted - so I rested up because I was going out socialising that night.
- Wednesday** Late night last night! Nothing planned today and I was exhausted so I stayed in bed.
- Thursday** Quiet day. Did a bit of housework, lazed around, went back to bed and went out again at night.
- Friday** Assignment due in so work, work, work! I went to bed early.
- Weekend** Nothing !!! Had a long lie in, did some reading and watched TV.

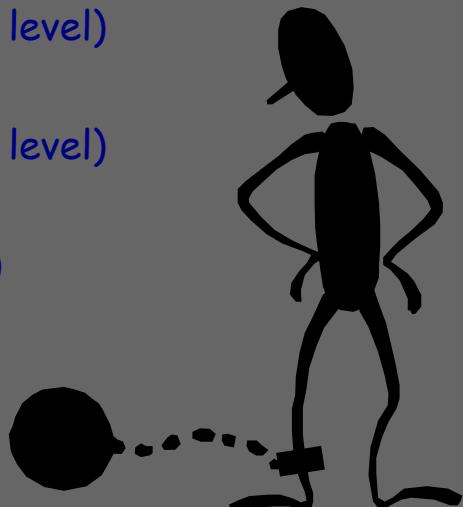
Pacing is:-

**STICKING TO YOUR PLAN  
AND NOT NECESSARILY  
DOING WHAT YOU FEEL**

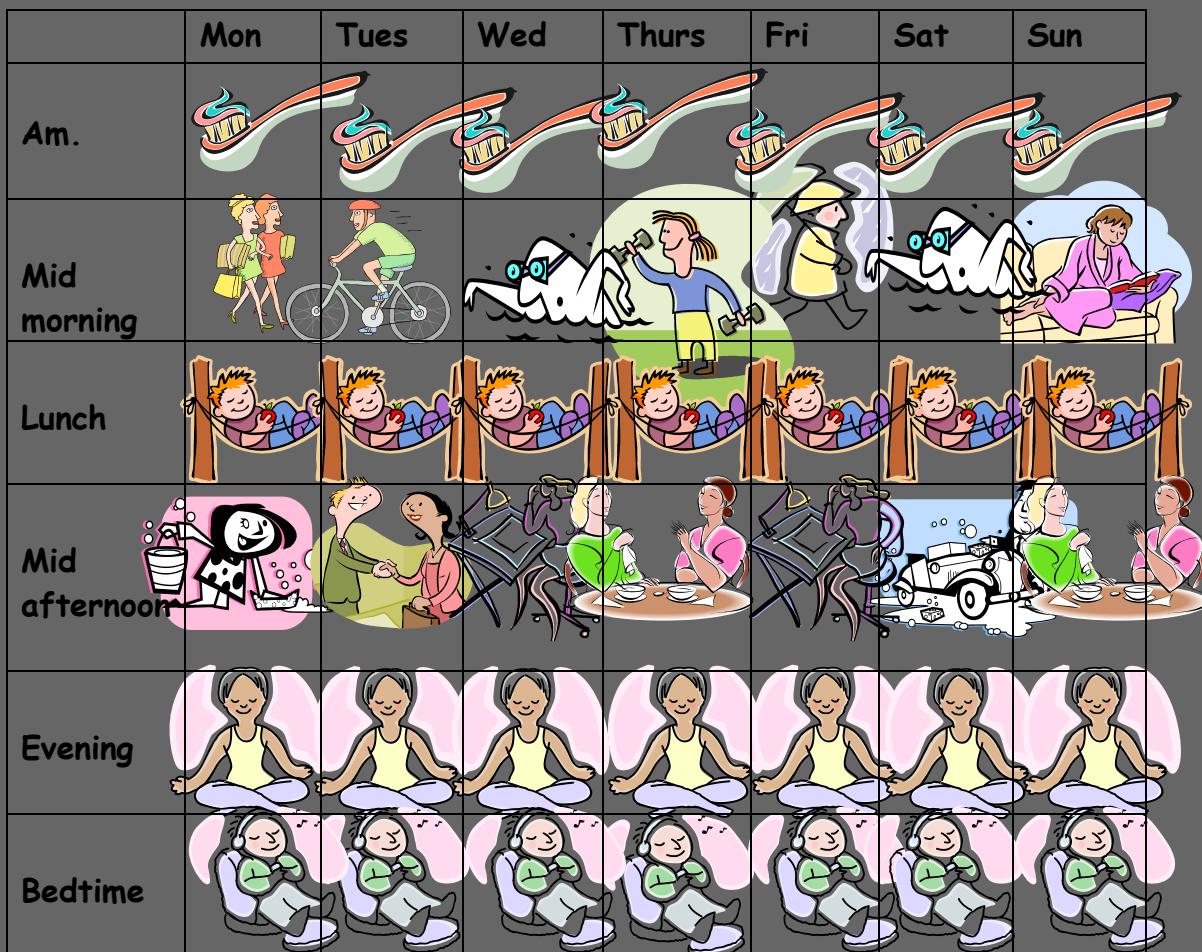


### Example of planning

- **Morning routine**
- **Flexible routine** (consistent activity level)
- **Rest**
- **Flexible routine** (consistent activity level)
- **Relaxation**
- **Evening routine** (prepare for sleep)



# This is What Pacing Looks Like



## Diary extract

- Got up and went to bed same time every day
- Did consistent „getting up routine“ with plenty of rests
- Did something active most mornings
- Did regular relaxation session after meals
- Prioritised my work and set aside time for pleasure
- Planned for work or pleasure in the afternoons

## Summary A good week

- I built my week around my capabilities.
- I prioritised my activities and stuck to my routines.
- I felt that I had achieved things and made steps towards my recovery.

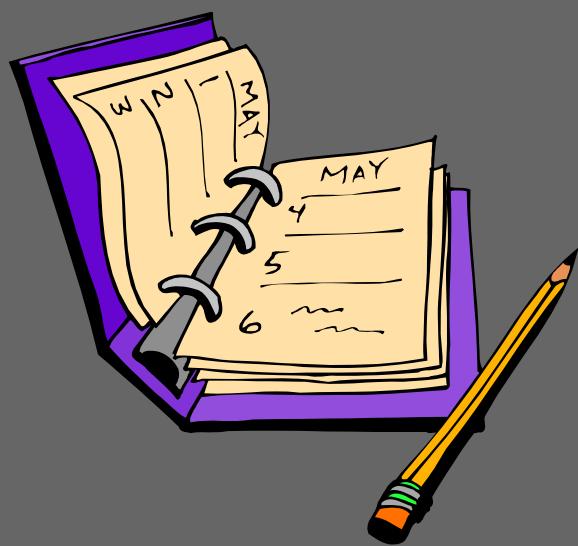
# Using a Weekly Planner

SPLIT THE DAYTIME INTO THREE OR  
FOUR CHUNKS

COMMIT TO ONE ACTIVITY A DAY  
(or two if this fits in with your „so-so“ day)

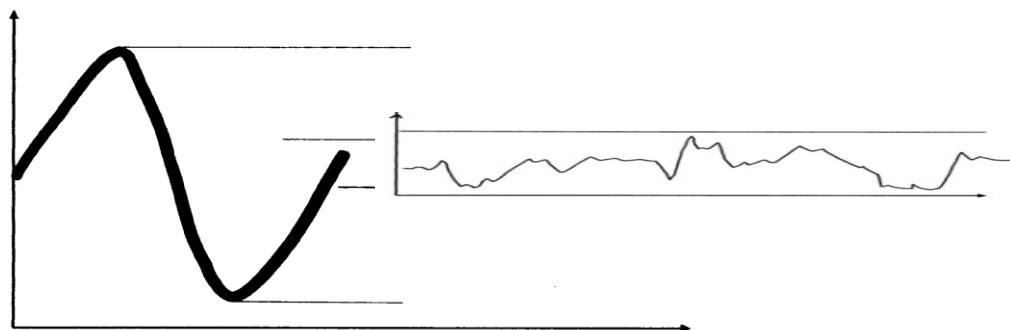
and

*Plan for pleasure*



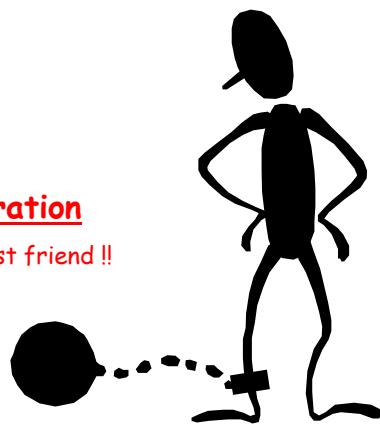
## Pacing - What to Expect

Ups and downs within boundaries



Stop overdoing things !!!!!

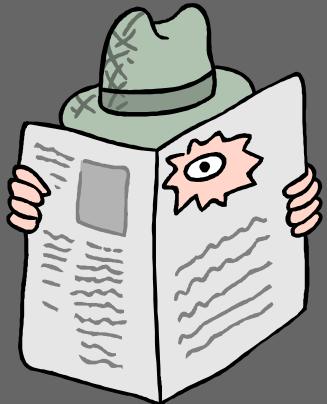
Frustration  
is your best friend !!



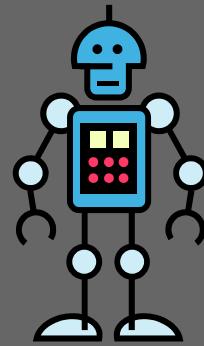
# CAUTION

Pacing is Not

Being hyper-vigilant



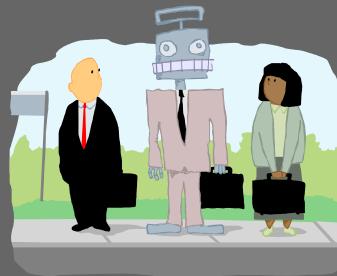
Robotic calculations



Constantly worrying  
about overdoing things



Every day being completely the same  
in every way



Nor is it necessarily doing what we feel.

