

Keeping active

When your activity level decreases, you may become even less motivated and more lethargic. When you stop doing the things you used to enjoy, you miss out on good experiences. This can make you feel even worse, building a vicious cycle.

If you are feeling low, it can be difficult to find the motivation and energy to do things that could lift your mood. You may find that you give up activities that you previously enjoyed. Over time, you might end up doing very little. This can lead you to feel even lower. You might also neglect your daily tasks and responsibilities, and start to feel bad about yourself or overwhelmed by all the things you have to do.

One way to feel better is to be more active, especially in enjoyable activities and in tackling your list of tasks and responsibilities, in a realistic and achievable way, so that you set yourself up to succeed. It's good to start gradually and build up what you are doing over time, as you would if you were training for a sports event.

Keeping active has many benefits:

- It helps you to feel better. It gives your mind something else to think about and can help give you a sense of purpose, that you are moving forward and taking control of your life again. You may even get some enjoyment from the activities you do.
- It helps you to feel less tired. Usually, when you are tired, you need rest. However, when you are feeling low, the opposite is true. Sleeping more and doing less will only make you feel more lethargic and tired. It also leaves room for your mind to go over negative things, which will make you feel even worse.
- It can help you think more clearly. Once you get started, you may find that you take a different perspective on problems.

However, it may not be easy to get started. You might think negative thoughts such as "I won't enjoy doing this," or "It's too hard," or "I'll probably fail at this too", or you might try to do too much too soon. Things that you usually don't even have to think about doing can seem daunting.

Pace yourself realistically, taking into account both your physical limitations and how you are feeling. You might need to take things more slowly than you have done in the past, to take more breaks, or to switch between one task and another, so that you do not spend too long doing one thing. Think creatively about how you might do something in a more manageable way. Think about what might get in the way of you doing it, and plan ways round these barriers.

The weekly plan - *(Please see final sheet)*

You can use the last page of this leaflet to plan your week in advance. You may be able to do more of the things you want to, in addition to the things that you have to do. This can really help to lift your mood.

Start by filling in everything you have to do, such as picking up children from school and attending appointments. Then you can begin to plan other activities that you would like to do. Remember to pace yourself. You may find it helpful to plan in some time for:

- Things which are important to you and will give you a sense of achievement. Break big tasks down into smaller chunks. For example, if you want to sort out a pile of paperwork, you might make a start by spending twenty minutes on it each day. Often, it is easier to aim to do a task for a set period of time rather than trying to achieve a set amount.
- Things which you might enjoy. This might include things you have enjoyed in the past and new things you would like to try.
- Time spent with people whose company you like.
- Exercise. This can improve your mood and general health. It doesn't need to be anything too energetic. Walking or gentle yoga can be good options.
- Time for yourself - make time to relax and give yourself space between activities.
- Try to plan consistent bedtimes. Having a regular sleeping pattern can help improve your mood and energy levels.

Now, all you have to do is try to follow your plan each day. Give yourself credit for what you do, even if it seems quite small. Don't worry if unexpected things come up and you cannot stick to it exactly. On the other hand, don't let not feeling like doing anything stop you from doing what you had planned.

PALS

King's Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

This is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. The PALS office is located on the ground floor of the Hambleton Wing, near the main entrance on Bessemer Road - staff will be happy to direct you.

Tel: 020 3299 3601 Textphone: 020 3299 1878 Fax: 020 3299 3626

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Weekly Plan

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
08.00 - 10.00							
10.00 - 12.00							
12.00 - 14.00							
14.00 - 16.00							
16.00 - 18.00							
18.00 - 20.00							
20.00 - 22.00							