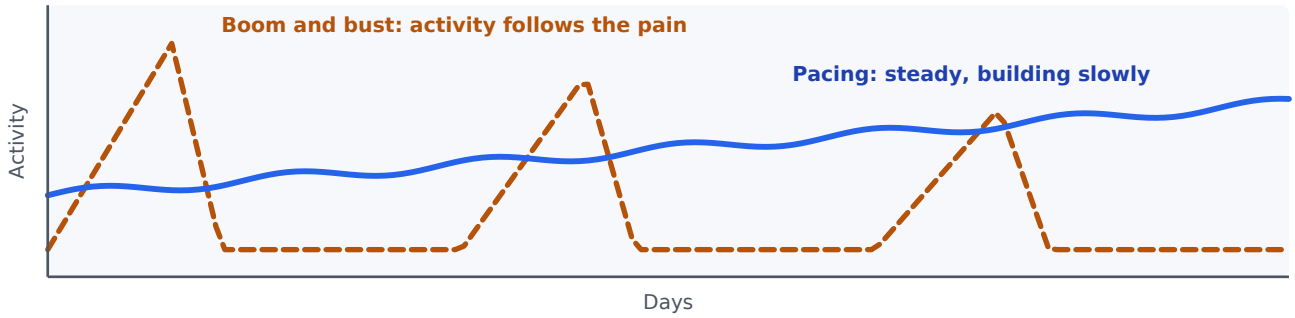
Boom and bust

Why good days can lead to bad weeks, and what to do about it.

On a good day it is tempting to catch up on everything. The next day, or the day after, pain or exhaustion hits and you are forced to rest. Then, once you recover, you push again. Over time the good days get fewer and the crashes get longer.



Why it happens

- Activity is guided by how you feel, not by a plan.
- There is a backlog, and guilt about it.
- "I must make the most of feeling OK."
- Stopping only when pain or fatigue forces you to.

The alternative: pacing

Pacing means doing a planned amount, on good days and bad days alike, and stopping before you have to.

1. **Find your baseline.** How much of an activity can you do without a flare-up afterwards, even on a bad day? Start below that.
2. **Go by the clock or the count, not the pain.** "Ten minutes of weeding" or "walk to the second lamppost".
3. **Take breaks before you need them.** Short and frequent.
4. **Switch tasks and positions.** Sit, stand, move.
5. **Build up slowly.** A small increase every week or two, and only when the current level is comfortable.
6. **On good days, stick to the plan.** This is the hardest part and the one that matters most.

> **The result**
> You do a little less on good days and a lot more on bad days. Over a month, you get more done with fewer crashes.

An activity where I tend to boom and bust

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My pacing plan

Set a baseline for each activity and build up from it slowly.

Name _____ Date _____

For each activity, work out how much you can manage on a bad day without a flare-up. That is your baseline. Start a little below it (about four fifths), and do that amount every time, good day or bad.

Activity	My baseline	Starting amount	How often	Rest afterwards
Walking	*10 minutes*	*8 minutes*	*Twice a day*	*5 minutes*

Building up

Increase by a small amount (around a tenth) only when you have managed the current level comfortably for a week or more.

Week	Activity and amount	How it went	Change for next week
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

What will tempt me to do more on a good day, and what I will tell myself

My plan for a bad day (do a reduced amount, not nothing)

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