

FLARE UP PLAN

**Expect and plan for flare-ups. Don't let pain changes take you by surprise. Having pain tools handy and ready is the best plan. Here are a few more pearls of wisdom:

1) **Breathe:** Use relaxation techniques. Keep relaxation CD handy. Practicing the relaxation response throughout the day keeps the "snowball effect" from occurring.

2) **Posture:** Interrupt prolonged positions and remember to change positions every hour. "Take Charge" of this! Set an alarm if needed. Always keep towels, pillows or posture supports handy. Good alignment decreases unnecessary muscular effort preventing spasms.

3) **Modalities/Pain tools:** Use ice, heat, TENS, tennis/racquet ball massage to treat painful spots. Think about what your body needs at this time.

4) **Home Exercise Program:** At this time, perform your home exercises more gently. Breathe into each movement fully. Keep all movements in a pain free range. Warm up before getting up.

5) **Recovery:** Once symptoms have decreased, continue a few more days in "Flare-up management mode" before resuming life at the pre-flare intensity. Allow your body time for a FULL RECOVERY! Flare-up recovery has its own timetable and cannot be rushed.

6) **Confidence:** Everyone has flare-ups. The more experience you get in managing them, the shorter time they will last. During a flare you may need to ask someone for additional help with chores or tasks. It is paramount that you prioritize which activities/chores/tasks you absolutely HAVE to do. The others can be delegated or postponed.

7) **Review:** If you can figure out the cause of the flare up, you are a genius!! *Be kind to yourself, you are learning!*