



Ready to start moving and exercising?

Being ready to change, and ready to add regular daily movement, exercise and activity to your routine can be hard when you are in pain.

The following 4 stages describe the '**processes of change**' that are usually part of getting moving and exercising when you have persistent pain. Have a look at the stages, and the examples which link with the pain stories and video clips for this module.



Stages of change

1. Stage 1 is **precontemplation**, where someone is not ready or willing to consider change. For example, initially **Shaun** stopped exercising because of his back pain and spent a lot of time lying on the couch
2. Stage 2 is **contemplation**, where the person has begun to consider changing, but hasn't yet taken any action. (For example, when Jamie realises he has a problem, but is reluctant to seek help because he likes to do it on his own)
3. Stage 3 is the **preparation** stage, where someone is preparing to make a move towards change. (For example, **Jamie** has prepared to start MBST (Mindfulness based Stress Reduction) but thinks “that’s meditation, what’s that going to do?”)
4. Stage 4 is the **action stage**, when you are actively involved in change. For example, Shaun describes joining his mates to start gently exercising at Jacob’s ladder; and Jamie describes starting MBSR as part of learning to find the grey areas and avoid overdoing or underdoing his exercise.

Use the following table to help you plan your movement, exercise and activity changes.

Write down some of your thoughts about where you are in this process, and list the benefits and costs you can expect.

Change Process Balance Sheet

List the negative impact of pain on your quality of life. For example, what are some of the things you have stopped doing that you really enjoy and want to get back into?

- Taking the dog for a walk
- Playing with my kids

List the positive aspects of pain on your quality of life. For example, stopping exercising and moving may mean you have less pain and get less stressed, at least in the short term.

- I don't have to go to kids' sport each weekend and manage the car trip and sitting about for an hour

List the personal benefits that you expect if you change your approach to exercise, movement and activity. Plan how you will have to change in order to achieve this goal. For example:

- Perhaps you will be able to enjoy exercising with your family and friends if you better manage your pain

List the personal costs that you might expect if you change yourself. Think about what you'll need to give up to change. For example:

- Perhaps you'll get less time to lie on the couch, and planning to go the kids' sport may initially be more stressful



Listening to the [pain stories](#) of Shaun, Donna, Rick, Rose or Jamie to hear how they manage their exercise and set goals, and their ups and downs, may also be helpful. Think about setting goals (see the '[Pacing and Goal Setting](#)' module for more details), so you can achieve little things that make your life better.