



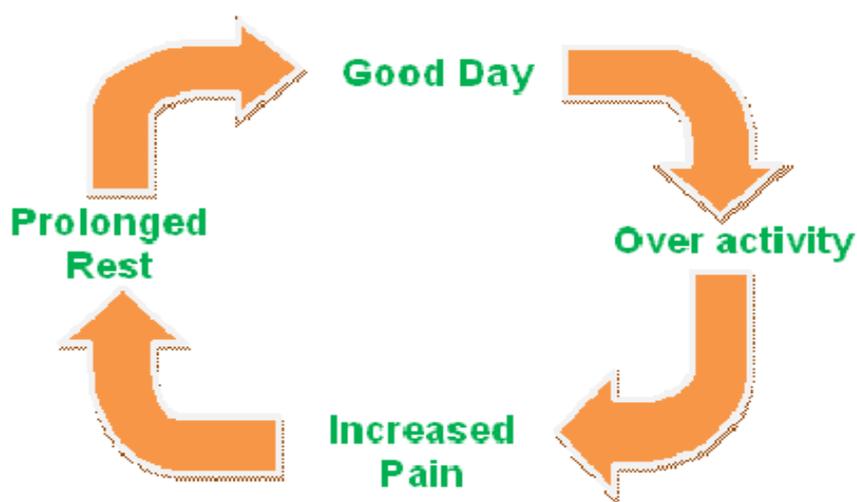
Royal Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Patient Information

# Boom or Bust

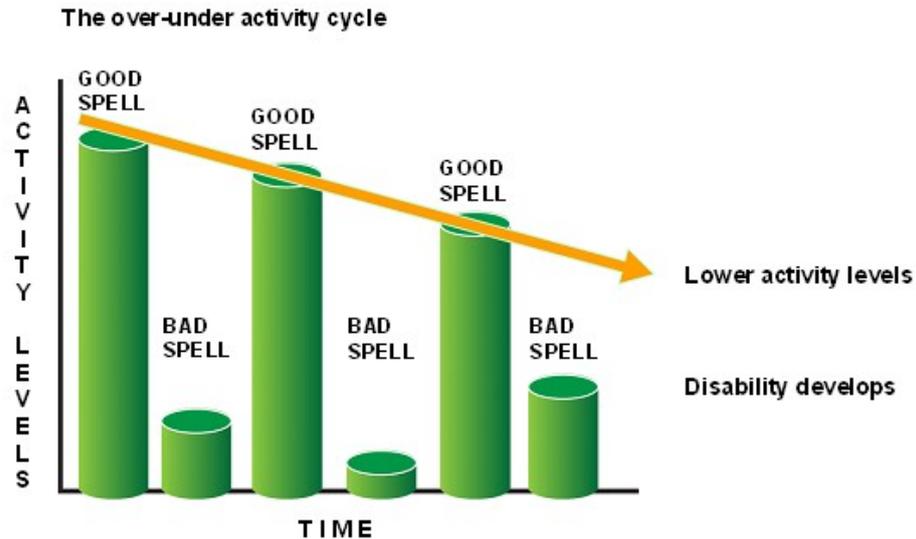
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## Boom and Bust

A common cycle for people with pain involves tending to push yourself until the pain tells you to stop. This is usually followed by a period of increased pain, causing you to rest or do less. When the pain has settled a bit you get going again and overdo it once more. This vicious circle is called the over-under activity cycle.



When you cut back on activities, rest more or generally do less your body starts to get out of condition - joints become stiffer and muscles weaker. Consequently you are less able to cope with activity and your pain comes on sooner/increases when you try to do anything. It can seem like you are getting worse medically when in fact you are just getting worse physically. Every time you overdo it, you are more likely to avoid these activities in the future, thinking that you can't do them or don't want to suffer the consequences in terms of more pain. However, it's not that you can't or shouldn't do these activities, its just that you are trying to do too much of them, too soon.



### People stay in the Activity Cycle because:

- there is work that "has to be done", and things they want to do
- it feels better to finish the job
- of feeling guilty about overloading others
- of trying to ignore or beat the pain
- periods of rest/doing less do ease the symptoms in the short term but prolonged rest/doing less leads to deconditioning and this doesn't help us to return to normal activity in the long run

### What are the negative consequences of the Activity Cycle?

- Get more pain, because we keep overdoing it
- Get punished for trying to do things
- Periods of rest/doing less add up and cause deconditioning
- Tend to be making less progress over time with activity when we want to be making more progress
- Can't make plans or commitments
- Pain and activity are unpredictable leads to deconditioning and more pain
- Pain decides how much you do, when you do it etc, not you - **your symptoms are in charge when you should be**
- Leads to feelings of frustration and failure

### Warning!

#### Avoid over and under activity

By over and under activity we mean the tendency that some people have of doing too much when things are going OK, and then suffering for it later. This can become a common pattern for people with variable but longstanding health conditions. By recognising your triggers for over and under activity, and then working to more realistic and manageable levels of activity, you can minimise the possibility of this happening to you.