

# Footstep 10

## Managing setbacks

**Setbacks are common in managing pain and having a plan in place to manage them is key. It is important to prepare patients for setbacks, manage their expectations and discourage 'all-or-nothing' thinking.**

Setbacks can arise for no obvious reason, or they may be related to tiredness, pacing problems, a change in mood or a change in medication. Using the footsteps for living well with pain may reduce the chance and frequency of setbacks that

the patient experiences. You can encourage the patient to make a setback plan. This is best done at a time when things are going well.

### Action to take

Share the setback plan guide *Maintaining progress and managing setbacks* (see below) for the person to explore and shape for themselves.

Here are some examples of things that your patient could include in their plan:

- **Reducing activity levels (though not stopping) and introducing more regular small breaks**
- **Avoid complete rest – this results in about 1% loss of**

**muscle strength each day! So, doing something is still better than nothing**

- **Pace more but keep active**
- **Practice relaxation techniques**
- **Ask for help from others**
- **Challenge negative thoughts**
- **Plan more small treats and a reward when the setback is over**

# Resources for your patient

## Maintaining progress and managing setbacks – leaflet

A useful leaflet for patients to learn more about setbacks, identify their triggers and develop an effective setback plan.  
From *Live Well with Pain*

[https://editorhttps://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/uploads-7e3kk3/12506/maintaining\\_progress\\_and\\_managing\\_setbacks.de08dc64d7c6.pdf/oleon.com/publication/127124/pages/1401460](https://editorhttps://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/uploads-7e3kk3/12506/maintaining_progress_and_managing_setbacks.de08dc64d7c6.pdf/oleon.com/publication/127124/pages/1401460)

## Online resources

Health Talk is a valuable resource where people share helpful ways of living with long term health conditions:

<https://www.healthtalk.org/>

## Key points

- **Setbacks are likely to occur but can pass**
- **Working through the other footsteps can reduce the risk of setbacks**
- **It is important to encourage patients to plan for setbacks**

## Get the resources

All the booklets and leaflets described in this sheet can be downloaded and printed from the online version of Ten Footsteps: [www.resources.livewellwithpain.co.uk/10-footsteps](http://www.resources.livewellwithpain.co.uk/10-footsteps)