



How to manage your MSK problem effectively

This is a quick guide to help you to get the most out of our **self-help** resources.

Deciding to exercise regularly, whether for fitness or to improve the ability of your body and joints to work at their best is like a 'recipe'. It needs the right 'ingredients' and how you put these together matters. It often takes a little bit of practice to get it right.

The Ingredients

Time: Time is needed to plan what, where and when you are going to commit to your exercises just like taking time to read this guide through to the end. Creating a routine can help to improve your staying power!

Safe Environment: Find a suitable place where you feel confident and relaxed.

Preparation:

1. Read through the 'important facts' section which you will find at the beginning of each exercises section to decide if you need to consult a health care professional before starting.
2. Decide what to do. Watch or read all the information and exercises you feel are suitable for you before starting and choose which to start with.
3. Practice the exercises and become familiar with them before increasing the number of times you repeat them (the repetitions).

The Method

Now you have a clear plan with regards to **WHAT** and **WHERE** let's look at the **HOW?**

Exercising with pain can be more difficult than if you are pain free. Quite often you will feel some discomfort as you start to get moving.

Here are some general principles when deciding how much pain or discomfort is acceptable.



If the pain increases slightly and then settles, this is fine.



If the pain is more than mild but settles within 30 mins, this is also fine.



If the pain increases a lot and last for several hours, the exercises may need to be altered.

In general, exercises should become easier to do over time.

For more detailed advice about this please see this link (5 min read): [General Principles of Exercising \(scot.nhs.uk\)](https://www.scot.nhs.uk/health/General-Principles-of-Exercising/)

Keeping a record: Record what you do so you can keep track of your progress remembering that being able to do more, even if your pain stays about the same, is still great progress.

The Results

Getting it 'right' this takes practice, patience and remembering that it's normal to have 'good' and 'bad' days. One of the key skills is to adapt what you do without stopping exercise or activity completely.

If you are struggling to find the right 'recipe' that works for you seeking help and advice from a physiotherapist can help.