



THE  
PELVIC PAIN  
NETWORK

# Your Pelvic Pain Flare-Up Toolkit

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**Flare-ups happen, so it's best to have a plan in place.**

If you live with pelvic pain this toolkit is aimed at empowering and enabling you to plan ahead. We would always recommend discussing your individual needs with your healthcare provider.

- **Flare-ups are part of persistent pain:**

- It is understandable to feel fearful, anxious, angry, or frustrated when we experience a painful flare-up. It's important to acknowledge that flare-ups are a common feature of persistent pain, even when you are taking steps towards recovery.
- Know that a flare-up does not mean you are not making progress.
- Try not to blame yourself or your body.
- Having a plan for flare ups can help you to not anxiously await them.

- **Building Your Support Team:**

- Reach out to friends, family, or support groups. Share your experiences and feelings.
- Connect with fellow women who understand your journey—they can offer empathy and practical advice.
- Consider professional support, such as therapists or counsellors, to support your emotional well-being.
- Check out our “About” page for specialists and charities who can support you.

- **Communicating Your Needs:**

- Be open with your healthcare team about your pain levels, triggers, and limitations.
- Advocate for yourself—express what you need during flare-ups (e.g., rest, adjustments at work, or modified exercise routines).
- Educate loved ones about your condition so they can provide meaningful support.

- **Positive Self-Talk and Affirmations:**

- Remind yourself that you are strong and resilient.
- Use affirmations like “I am capable of managing my pain” or “I am healing.”
- Try to replace negative thoughts with positive ones. You have successfully navigated flare-ups before.

- **Principles of Relative Rest:**

- Know that resting is not being lazy.
- Understand that rest doesn’t mean complete inactivity. It’s about finding a balance.
- Listen to your body—when pain flares up, reduce high-intensity activities but continue to move your body in a way that feels good.
- Prioritise activities that you enjoy and feel good.

- **Positions of Ease:**

- Experiment with different positions to find comfort during flare-ups.
- Consider lying down with knees bent or using pillows for leg support in sitting or lying.
- Gentle stretches or yoga poses may also feel good.

- **Pain relief medication (as prescribed):**

- Follow your healthcare provider’s recommendations for oral pain medication.
- Take medications consistently and on time. A timer on your phone can help or you could delegate this to a loved one.
- Keep a pain diary to track effectiveness and side effects.

- **Heat therapy:**

- Try soaking in a hot bath, taking deep and slow breaths while listening to music or a relaxing podcast.
- Apply a warm compress or heating pad to the lower abdomen or pelvic area. Heat can soothe muscle tension and alleviate pain.
- Use caution to avoid burns—wrap the heat source in a small towel and limit sessions to 20 minutes.

- **Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS):**
  - Consult with your physiotherapist to learn proper TENS placement.
  - Use TENS on your pelvic region, lower back or lower ankles during flare-ups to modulate pain signals in the pelvis. It is useful to try this ahead of a flare-up
  - TENS can be used for long periods throughout the day and provide effective pain relief over time
- **Healthy Bladder and Bowel Habits:**
  - Stay hydrated during the day but avoid excessive fluid intake before bedtime. A water bottle next to your favourite recovery spot may help.
  - Maintain regular bowel movements with regular meals. It may be helpful to communicate this to your loved ones ahead of a flare-up so that they know this might be one way that they can help.
  - Eat comfort food that you know helps keep your stools soft and tummy not bloated.
- **Gentle Movement:**
  - Movement is essential for circulation and preventing stiffness. Movement does not necessarily mean formal exercise. All movement adds up.
  - Opt for low-impact exercises like walking, swimming, or tai chi.
  - Gradually increase activity levels as pain subsides.
  - Having some pain with movement does not mean the movement is bad for you, or will necessarily make the pain worse.

Remember, each woman's experience is unique, so adapt these strategies to your individual needs. Reach out to your compassionate pelvic health physio team for personalised guidance and support. You're not alone, we're here to support you.