

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SCANS, ACTIVITY AND PAIN



PART 1

Scans don't explain pain and recovery

Your scans...

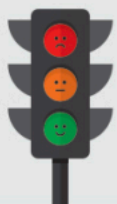


don't show: do show:

- the amount of pain you feel
- your future pain levels
- your ability to do daily activities.
- age related changes – think of them like 'wrinkles on the inside'
- findings that would've been there before your pain began and will still be there when your pain is gone.

Some scan findings are relevant to your injury, but it's important to know that¹:

- these findings will not usually change your treatment
- you are being given this information because there is nothing on your scans for you to worry about.



You have been given the **green light**—it is safe for you to increase your activity!

Activity and exercise are necessary for your recovery, see your health professional for guidance.



Sometimes it's hard to get started. Ask yourself:



- What activity do you enjoy or have you enjoyed in the past?
- What would you like to do more of?
- Can you do this activity regularly in a fun and meaningful way? (For example with a friend or family member, or in an enjoyable environment).
- Do I need a coach? Tap into this free personal coaching service for help with healthy eating, getting active and losing weight: www.gethealthy.sa.gov.au
- Is your pain medication slowing you down? Check out www.reachforthefacts.com.au or chat to your health professional.

How I'll go about it:

Bring this plan to your next appointment.

What	When	✓ Done
30 minute walk	Monday & Wednesday evening	✓

Watch this video about back pain:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-cBtPSf0Hc



(1) Your health care professional will be able to explain the relevance of your scan findings after assessing you and your scans. | Adapted from Karran et al. (2018), with permission.

PART 2

Pain is changeable

Understanding your pain can change the way it feels.



3 great findings from pain research

1. pain is not an accurate indicator of the severity of injury
2. pain systems can become OVER-PROTECTIVE: The longer someone experiences pain, the better their system becomes at producing it – **you LEARN to make pain**
3. pain systems can be trained to be less protective – **you can also UNLEARN pain.**

You can re-train your pain system by:

- Understanding your pain better (watch this week's video below and talk to your clinician)
- Re-thinking your beliefs about the best ways to recover.



Pain can be 'turned up' by²:

- being stressed or anxious about anything
- feeling low, depressed or worried
- avoiding activity
- being unwell or tired
- relying on passive treatments
- the things you say and the things other people say
- pressures at home and work
- long-term opioid use³
- everyday life.



Pain can be 'turned down' by²:

- exercising regularly
- reducing stress
- eating and sleeping well
- socialising
- working with a supportive clinician
- taking control of your recovery
- knowing that there is a scientifically proven pathway out
- everyday life.

? What things turn your pain up? These are things that you interpret as dangerous for you, even if they're not. Sometimes they hide in hard to find places.

? What things turn your pain down? These are things that you interpret as safe for you. Sometimes they hide in hard to find places.

? What can you change to turn your pain down? Chat to your health professional for help.

This week's contribution to my recovery:

Bring this plan to your next appointment.

What	When	✓ Done
30 minute walk	Monday & Wednesday evening	✓

Watch this video to learn more about pain:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikUzvSph7Z4



(2) GL Moseley and DS Butler (2015) The Explain Pain Handbook: Protectometer. Noigroup Publications, NOI Australasia Pty Ltd, Adelaide, Australia. | Adapted from Karran et al. (2018), with permission.

(3) Reach for the facts on prescription opioids: www.reachforthefacts.com.au

PART 3

Meaningful exercise reduces pain



Meaningful exercises should be graded, linked to goals, tailor-made for you, pleasurable and fulfill your physical and psychological needs.

Some benefits are:



A healthy body

Improves the health of your heart and lungs. It can boost your energy and help with weight loss.



Psychological wellbeing

Improves mood, reduces stress and assists sleep. Gets your mind and body in sync. Exercising can be enjoyable and social.



Strength & fitness

Regular exercise improves strength, endurance and flexibility, and helps you to do the things you want and need to do.



Reduced health risks

Helps to prevent and manage conditions such as arthritis, heart disease, diabetes and cancer.

Exercise can help us UNLEARN pain.

It may take time, repetition and small gains before you really believe that increasing activity is safe.

It's usual to feel some discomfort after you exercise. When you are in an overprotective pain state, it is very hard to hurt yourself. Nudging into discomfort can lead to gradual improvement. Talk to your health professional for more information and guidance.



This week's contribution to my recovery:

Bring this plan to your next appointment.

What	When	✓ Done
1 hour swim	Wednesday & Friday evening	✓

Learn more by listening to Freya and Steve's stories of back pain and recovery:
www.tamethebeast.org/stories



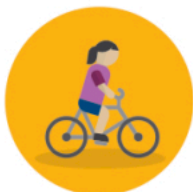
Talk to your health professional if you have any concerns. | Adapted from Karran et al. (2018), with permission.

PART 4

Things to reflect on



As increased activity, exercise and knowledge gradually become part of your everyday life, remember:



Activity is safe

You were given the green light to move! Feel confident that you can safely become more active.



Be active

You need movement to be healthy. As well as the physical and psychological benefits, activity helps you to unlearn pain. It also improves our quality and length of life.



Stay optimistic

Everyone has ups and downs. You will return to most (if not all) of the things that you like and need to do.



Pain is changeable

Understanding how you learn and unlearn pain can have a big impact on your recovery.



Where do I go from here?

- continue to plan exercise every week – create healthy habits and reduce the bad ones
- expect to have ups and downs on the road to recovery – everyone does
- be patient and hopeful – recovery from persistent pain can take a long time.

Always talk to your health professional if you have concerns (and take this sheet with you).

My ongoing plans for recovery:

What	When	✓ Done
1 hour pilates	Every Monday & Thursday morning	✓

Watch this to learn about understanding pain:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEWc2XtaNwg



Adapted from Karran EL at al (2018) a quasi-randomised, controlled, feasibility trial of GLITTER – a psychoeducational intervention for adults with low back pain attending secondary care. DOI 10.7717/peerj.4301., with permission.