

Starting an Action Plan—Some Things to Consider in Managing Your Fibromyalgia Pain

When fibromyalgia pain intensifies, you can often feel more stress and concern than usual. It helps to have a personalized pain action plan ready, one that includes simple steps to help you cope with your pain.

Your personal **Fibromyalgia Pain Action Plan** begins with three important steps:

- Acknowledge your pain**
- Honor your limits**
- Build your support system**

Here's how to get started:

1. Acknowledge your pain

In addition, keep track of when it occurs. Sometimes, the pain of fibromyalgia can be brought on by daily activity and certain events or occasions. Take a moment to reflect about the last "bad" day. What did you do the day before? Did you have a long list of to-dos that you tried to complete? Did you try to make up for lost time from past "bad" days? Are you preparing for the holiday season or a special event?

Write down the things that may have brought about your pain. Then keep this list by the phone or on your refrigerator as a reminder. Having a list of the things that cause you pain may help you be more aware of those activities in the future. This is just one way to help you manage the severity of your next "bad" day.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

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2. Honor your limits

Accepting your limits and working within them may help you better manage your pain. One way you can do this is by creating a personal statement that you can use every day. It's a simple yet powerful way to stay aware of your boundaries—as you define them—and to keep you focused on what's important for you.

Creating a personal statement is easier than you think. Here's all you need:

An Acknowledgment—a statement that acknowledges what happens when you try to do too much on your “good” days.

Example: “I often do too much on “good” days because on “bad” days I find it hard to do anything. I usually pay the price of doing too much on a “good” day the very next day.”

Write your own: _____

An Action Step—a statement that gives you a specific action to take to avoid overdoing it.

Example: “I will make time to take a rest today. Whether it is quiet time that involves a short nap, reading a book, or listening to music, finding this time can help increase my chances of having another good day tomorrow.”

Write your own: _____

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3. Build your support system

Knowing whom you can rely on ahead of time is an important part of your **Pain Action Plan**. Just knowing that you have backup may help reduce your stress. Your support network can help with completing important tasks. For example, have them run an errand or pick up your children from school. Sometimes, they could just be there to listen. Take a moment, list the phone numbers of friends, family, or colleagues who may be able to help you out on “bad” days.

Name	Phone Number	Can Help With
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____

Congratulations.

You’ve just created your **Fibromyalgia Pain Action Plan**. Be sure to read your personal statements every day. Remember to pay attention to your daily activities and plan ahead of time for particular events or occasions. Be aware of pushing yourself too hard and try to honor your limits. These are simple things you can do to help you manage your fibromyalgia pain.