Nuffield Health

Your Rehabilitation Programme

Journal

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Welcome to Nuffield Health

We're the UK's largest healthcare charity, made up of our family of award-winning hospitals, fitness and wellbeing centres, medical centres and workplace wellbeing services.

Our purpose is to build a healthier nation and for the last 60 years, Nuffield Health's experts have been working together to make the nation fitter, healthier, happier and stronger, all for the public benefit.

Your Nuffield Health COVID-19 Rehabilitation Programme
The programme has been designed to support you and an ever-growing number of people who are finding it difficult to recover from the long-term effects of COVID-19.

Our range of experts means we can offer you personalised advice to help you with your rehabilitation and support you in your journey back to good health and wellbeing.

About the programme

Offering a unique blend of physical and emotional support, the programme is tailored to individual rehabilitation needs, focusing on the areas you need the most.

Your 12-week programme will be led by a Rehabilitation Specialist, who will begin by understanding your needs and goals before developing a plan that suits you and your lifestyle. As part of the programme, we have developed two key resources, the journal and online rehab hub.

This journal provides information and activities that will help you with your recovery, both physically and emotionally. You can record your goals, exercise and general activity as well as track your progress. Make sure you fill it in weekly and have it to hand when you speak to your Rehabilitation Specialist. It's a great way to see your progress, achievements and monitor your recovery.

Each week you'll have access to online resources to enable you get the most from the programme, through the rehab hub. From your weekly on-demand exercise classes to emotional wellbeing webinars, the hub provides the virtual elements to your programme. Spend some time familiarising yourself with the different sections.

www.nuffieldhealth.com/covid-rehab

"We're here to support and guide you through your recovery."

Your Rehabilitation Specialist

Throughout the programme you will receive support from your personal Rehab Specialist. Their role is to help you through your recovery by:

- Maintaining regular contact through weekly 1:1 calls and exercise sessions
- Working with you to set, achieve and maintain personal recovery goals
- Developing a plan that suits your needs and lifestyle
- Providing expert guidance and exercise therapy as well as lifestyle support
- Offering emotional wellbeing support
- Helping you to track your progress
- Fostering relationships with other participants

Once on the programme you will be part of a group of ten participants. Weeks 1 to 6 will be delivered remotely, so you will take part in the programme from your home. For weeks 7 to 12, the programme moves to face-to-face delivery, and exercise sessions will take place at your local Nuffield Health fitness and wellbeing centre. The page opposite shows the weekly breakdown of the programme.

Managing your recovery and getting back to pre-illness life and activities can be a slow and unsettling experience. When expectations and reality don't match up, you may become worried or frustrated. Recovery takes time and is an ongoing process. You will have good days and bad days, but it's important to listen to your body and rest if you need to. Starting from now, focus on what you can do and celebrate each achievement during your recovery.

12-week programme plan

Led by a Rehabilitation Specialist, you will aim to complete each of the elements below weekly:

WEEKS 1-6: at home (remotely)

One-to-one call with your Rehab Specialist

Tailored to your needs, the calls guide you through the programme and monitor progress. Topics include managing breathlessness, goal setting, exercise, nutrition, sleep and emotional wellbeing.

Group live stream exercise class

A weekly live online exercise class, led by your Rehab Specialist, and attended by participants in the same cohort. The level of activity is adapted to suit differing abilities within the group.

On-demand workout

Exercises specifically developed for rehabilitation are available on the rehab hub for you to complete weekly, in your own time.
www.nuffieldhealth.com/covid-rehab

'Build your own' self-directed activity

Your journal provides you with the tools and knowledge to 'Build your own' activity, focusing on the areas that make the biggest difference to your recovery. See pages 54-57.

WEEKS 7-12: at a fitness & wellbeing centre (face-to-face)

One-to-one call with your Rehab Specialist

Your individual calls will continue to provide guidance and support as you move through the latter six weeks of the programme, and will focus on achieving your goals.

Group exercise class

Moving into your local Nuffield Health fitness and wellbeing centre, the weekly group exercise class will be led by your Rehab Specialist encouraging interaction and support within the group.

On-demand workout

You will continue to access your online exercises weekly from home to complete in your own time.
www.nuffieldhealth.com/covid-rehab

'Build your own' self-directed activity

From week 7, the 'Build you own' activity will take place in the gym at your Nuffield Health fitness and wellbeing centre. Your Rehab Specialist will be available for guidance and support.

Your recovery from COVID-19

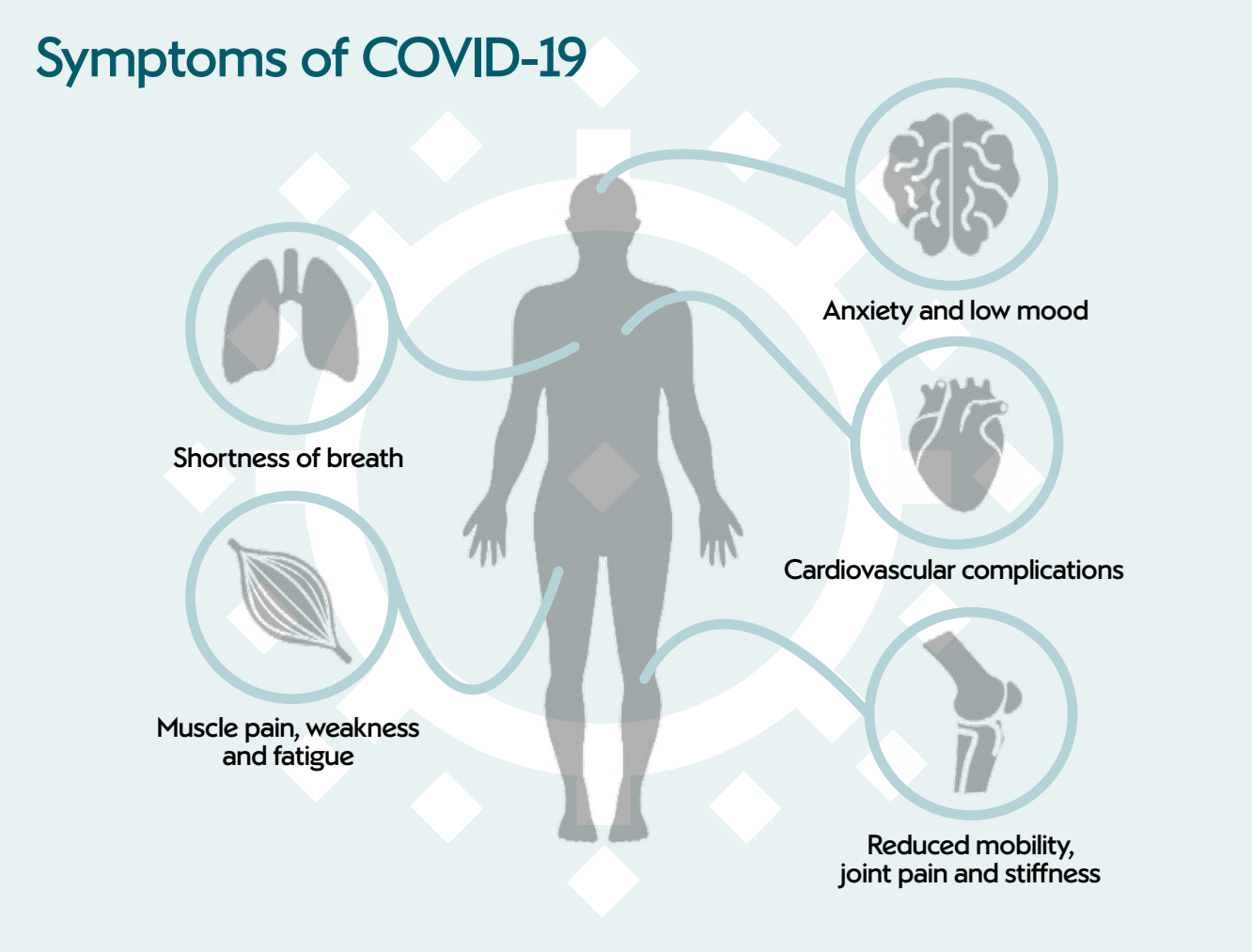
Recovery will vary from person to person and it may take time to come to terms with the impact the virus has had on your body and mind.

Formally recognised by the World Health Organisation COVID-19 is in an infectious virus and presents with a range of symptoms of varying severity. These can include fever, a new and continuous cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, loss of appetite, loss of smell and loss of taste.

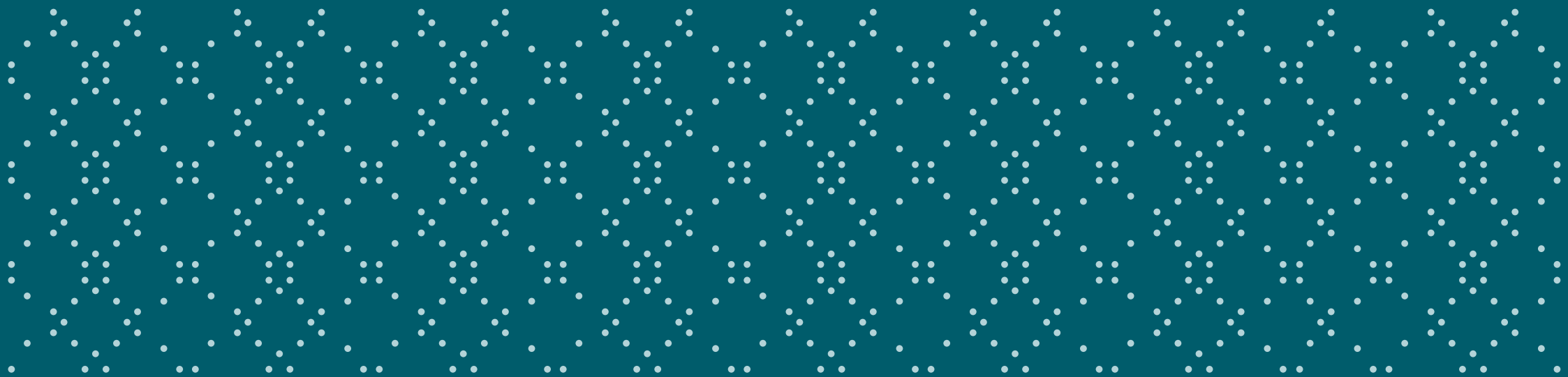
For many people the symptoms are mild, but some will develop severe symptoms and need to be admitted to hospital and treated in intensive care. They can be left with ongoing physical and emotion symptoms, as shown right.

Recovery from will vary from person to person and depend on your general health, age and how severe your illness caused by the virus was. How you recover is likely to differ depending on if you were treated in intensive care or elsewhere in hospital or at home.

While you are recovering from COVID-19, rehabilitation will improve your symptoms including exercise tolerance and muscle strength and help manage your breathlessness and fatigue. Our programme will focus on specialist support, along with providing you with self-guided learning materials to help your sleep, diet and any anxiety or low mood you may be experiencing.



"Our rehabilitation programme will focus on breathing, functional and physical exercises along with providing you with self-guided training materials to help your mood, sleep and any anxiety you may be experiencing."



Physical wellbeing

Managing breathlessness

Feeling breathless is a common symptom of COVID-19 and can make you feel scared and anxious.

Why do I feel breathless?

Many people continue to feel breathless for some time after being acutely unwell. It is normal to feel breathless when you are exercising or doing strenuous physical tasks but some people can feel breathless even at rest. This can be worrying and make you feel out of control.

We know that the feelings of breathlessness do not always match up with the amount of air in your lungs and that it is not just lung function that affects how out of breath you feel. Anxiety can make the breathlessness worse (see page 30) so if you do feel breathless you should try to:

- Remain calm
- Find a comfortable position to rest in
- Focus on gentle, quiet breathing

What can I do to help?

Resting in any position where you are well supported and relaxed will help to make your breathing feel better. If you are feeling breathless, the positions shown here may help.

High side lying

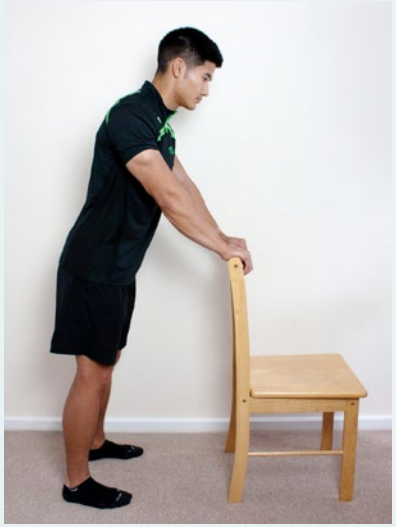
Lie on your side with pillows under your head and shoulders. Make sure your neck is well supported. Slightly bend your knees, hips and top leg.

Upright sitting

Choose a firm chair with arms if possible. If you chair doesn't have arms rest your forearms on cushions or pillows. Let your wrists and hands go limp.

Forward lean sitting

Sit on a firm chair and lean forward, resting your elbows on your knees. If you are feeling very breathless leaning on a pillow on a table in front of you can help.



Lean standing

If you are breathless while you're out and about, you could try leaning with your back or side to a wall or resting your hands or forearms on a chair or shopping trolley. If there is nothing available to lean on, you could rest your hands or thumbs in your waistband or belt loops, or across the shoulder strap of your handbag or rucksack if you are carrying one.

Quiet breathing exercises

Practising quiet breathing exercises every day can help train the right breathing muscles, in your lower tummy, to work with minimal effort. This will help you feel more in control of your breathing.

- Get into a comfortable position with your head, neck, shoulders and body relaxed and loose
- Close your eyes to help you relax and focus on your breathing
- Put one hand on your tummy
- Slowly breathe in, through your nose if you can, feeling your tummy rise gently against your hand
- Breathe out through your mouth, feeling your tummy fall
- Try to use as little effort as possible and make your breaths slow and smooth. With every breath out, try to feel more relaxed and calm
- When fully in control of your breathing, try timing your breathing with counting to slow it down. Breathe in one and out for two and three

Managing a persistent cough

If you are troubled with a persistent, tickly cough it can be distressing and disruptive. If your cough is caused by the need to clear phlegm you can try the Active Cycle of Breathing Technique opposite. If it is a non-productive cough you can learn to control it and help reduce irritation in the throat.

Try the following technique as soon as you feel a tickle:

- Close your mouth and swallow
- Press your tongue to your top teeth for 3-5 seconds
- Breathe slowly in and out through your nose using the quiet breathing technique (see page 11)

It will also help to:

- Sip water regularly
- Suck on plain boiled sweets. Avoid medicated lozenges
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol
- Speak slowly and quietly

Managing your breathing during activity

It is normal to get out of breath during some activities and exercise and this is a positive reaction that is needed to help your muscles work more efficiently again. It's important to work at the right level for you to help you to keep in control of your breathing.

- Whilst doing an activity try saying 'This activity is doing me good!'
- If you can say the sentence with two or three stops for breath, you are working at the right level
- If you can say it without stopping, increase the intensity
- If you can't speak, or can't say more than one word at a time, slow down

During day-to-day activities you could try:

- **Pursed-lips breathing** – Breathe in gently through your nose and blow out gently with your lips pursed as though you were going to blow out a candle. Do not force your lungs empty.
- **Blow-as-you-go** – Breathe in before you make the effort then time your breath out as you are making the effort. For example, breathe in before you stand up, and blow out as you stand. Try using pursed-lips as you blow out.
- **Paced breathing** – Count to yourself as you walk or move and time your breathing with each step or movement. For example, breathe in for step one and out for steps two and three.

Other tips

- Spread your activities throughout the day as shown on page 16, using the 'Pace, Plan and Prioritise' principle
- Avoid sudden movements. Try to keep movements smooth and slow
- Avoid holding your breath
- Try eating small, regular meals rather than one or two larger meals
- Take small mouthfuls at a time, avoid foods that are difficult to chew and add sauce where able
- Take regular sips of flat fluid

Keeping your chest clear

If you are still coughing up phlegm, also known as sputum, this can make you feel more breathless. It is important to keep your chest as clear as possible. **The Active Cycle of Breathing** technique shown right can help with this.

Do this in a comfortable position, away from others if possible, for up to 10 minutes or until your chest feels clear. Trying the cycles in different positions, such as lying on your tummy, sitting upright or lying on your side, can be helpful to move the phlegm from different areas of the lungs. If you can, try to avoid coughing throughout the cycle and only cough if a huff has not managed to clear your phlegm.

If your breathing is worrying you and does not feel like it is getting better, please see your GP or respiratory physiotherapist. If you are feeling acutely short of breath and concerned dial NHS 111 or 999 in a medical emergency.

Practise this with your Rehab Specialist

The Active Cycle of Breathing

1

Quiet Breathing

Start with relaxed, quiet breathing for 2-3 mins or until you feel your breathing rate slow and you feel in control of your breathing.

2

Deep Breathing Exercises

Next, take a long, slow, deep breath in, through your nose if you can. Try to keep your chest and shoulders relaxed. Hold if you feel comfortable for 2-3 secs then breathe out gently and relaxed through your mouth. Repeat 3-5 times.

Go back to **Quiet Breathing** if you need to at this stage.

3

Huff

A huff is a fast breath out through an open mouth and throat, like you are trying to steam up a mirror with your breath out. It may sound like you are saying 'Huh'. There are two types of huff, which help to move phlegm from different parts of the lungs.

The small-long huff
Will move phlegm from low down in your chest. Take a small breath in and then huff (squeeze) the air out. Do not force it so much that you cause wheezing or tightness in your chest.

The big-short huff
Use a big huff when the phlegm feels ready to come out. Take a big breath in then huff the air out quickly. Follow with quiet breathing.

Coping with pain

Feeling pain with a virus is common and it's important to try and manage your pain to improve your recovery.

Why do I feel pain?

Pain is complex and it is affected by a number of factors. These include your activity levels, your mood, anxiety and stress levels, poor sleep and fatigue. As you may have experienced, these are all things that having COVID-19 can impact upon. The good news is that having a better understanding can help people live well with pain.

What is pain?

It used to be thought that pain was simply a message from the body straight to the brain. Decades of research has shown it is more complex and our brain can change how we interpret the messages coming in from the tissues. For example, in the same way feeling anxious can often affect our blood pressure or our gut, it can also impact on our feelings of pain.

Due to its unpleasant nature, pain often makes people avoid activity and can affect sleep. Unfortunately inactivity leads to muscle weakness, weight changes and reduced capacity to complete tasks. It can also make your mood and sleep patterns worse. As these factors affect each other, it will often create a negative cycle that makes pain worse.

What can I do to help?

Keeping as active as possible and strengthening your muscles can help with the pain and reduce the negative cycle, as well as boost your COVID-19 recovery and overall health.

- **Exercise regularly**

Inactivity or low physical activity can often be the cause of joint, bone or muscle (musculoskeletal) pain. Exercise is proven to relieve pain from various conditions. Assess your pain now and again at 6 and 12 weeks to understand if exercise is acting as a successful corrective therapy.

- **Maintain a healthy diet**

Eating a healthy diet can help you manage pain particularly if you suffer from joint pain caused by inflammation. Omega-3 fatty acids – a type of fat found in oily fish such as salmon and tuna – are known to reduce inflammation, particularly in people with joint pain. For more information on healthy eating, see page 20.

- **Pace yourself**

Planning and pacing activity levels can be a strategy to help manage your pain. Pacing refers to breaking up individual activities into smaller chunks, and your day into active and rest periods. Rest periods are taken before a significant increase in pain occurs. Doing this will take practice and patience but you will gradually increase your tolerance and overall activity level.

- **Take time to relax**

When pacing is not possible or appropriate other tools can be used to support managing your pain levels. Relaxation techniques can be used to reduce tension and help with mood and emotional health as well as fatigue and sleep.

- **Monitor your mood**

Your experience of pain can be linked to your mood. Experiencing pain is likely to worsen your mood. Low mood can also worsen your pain symptoms. Try some of the 'Managing low mood' activities on pages 34-37.

- **Consult an expert**

If you feel your pain is predominantly musculoskeletal then a consultation with a physiotherapist would be useful. There may be simple yet underlying triggers of your pain that the physiotherapist can help combat using a variety of methods from exercises through to acupuncture.

Further reading

There are a number of useful resources available to help you learn about pain and how to self-manage your pain:

- www.retrainpain.org
- livewellwithpain.co.uk
- livingwellpain.net

"Keeping as active as possible and strengthening your muscles can help with the pain, as well as boost your COVID-19 recovery and overall health."

Managing fatigue

Feeling tired is normal after your body has had to fight a virus. Simple activities, like getting dressed can feel like hard work. Extreme tiredness is a common symptom following COVID-19.

Why do I feel tired?

For some people, tiredness can be made worse by symptoms of breathlessness, caused by the effects of the virus on the lungs. Others may find that muscle wasting or the stress of being very unwell makes them more tired. The tiredness can affect you in many different ways:

- **Physically** – You may feel weak and drained, and that your arms and legs feel heavy to move
- **Thinking skills** – You may finding it hard to focus and remember things
- **How you feel** – It is normal to feel teary, worried and frustrated by your tiredness

Your energy levels will go up and down on different days and you can learn how to manage this and improve them. It is important to realise that it's not just physical activity that can make you feel tired. People find thinking tasks like computer work, reading and talking to people can be just as tiring.

What can I do to help?

Think of your energy like money in a bank. All activities need energy (money). If you spend it all at once, you will have nothing left for the rest of the day, so it needs to be spent carefully. Try to spend it throughout the day to allow you to do what you need to do, when you need to do it.

A useful tool to achieve this is the **3P's Principle.** Using this can help you manage your tiredness so that you don't have crashes from overdoing things.

Pace

Break tasks down into smaller chunks and rest in between. You will recover faster if you don't work until you are exhausted. Rest time needs to be planned in your day.

Plan

Look at everything you have to do in a day or week and plan how you can spread them out. Think about things that make you very tired and make sure you have rest time planned around it.

Prioritise

Some things have to be done and others can wait. Decide what you have to find energy to do and what can wait.

Exercise is key to improving your energy levels. Pacing needs to be balanced with getting stronger and fitter. You need to work out how much you can do without feeling exhausted but not so little that you lose strength that will make you feel worse. You need to carefully and regularly do exercise that does not make your tiredness worse, A good rule of thumb is that the exercise should not cause you to feel worse the following day after a good night's sleep.

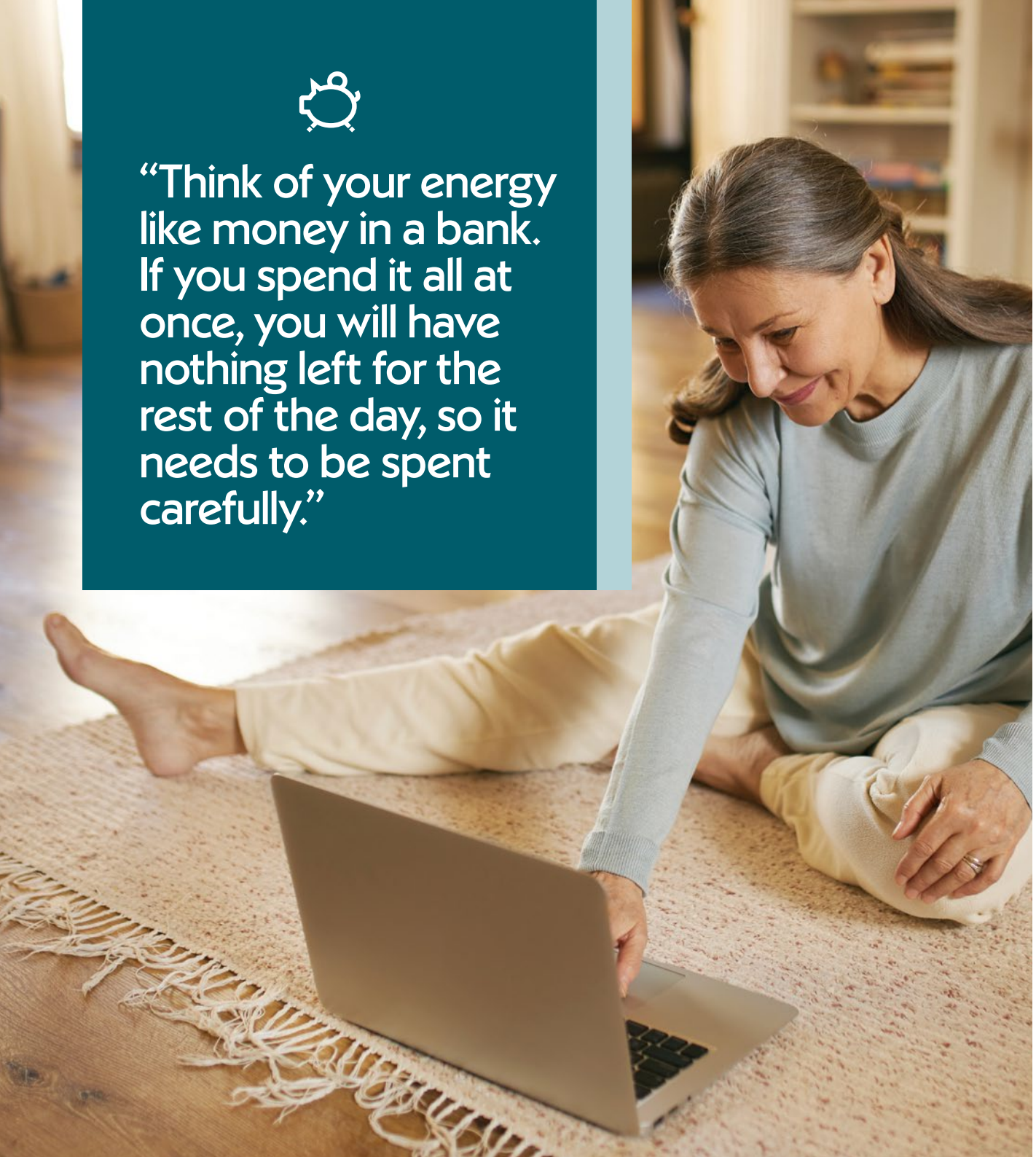
Getting your pacing right takes a bit of time and practice, try not to get frustrated if you don't get it right first time. Remember that any levels of fatigue that you are experiencing are also likely to be impacted by your mood. Try the 'Managing low mood' activities on pages 34-37.

Other things that can help with fatigue are getting a good night's sleep (see page 22) and eating a balanced diet (see page 20).

Recording your activity

Filling in your weekly activity diary (see page 59) can help you record what activities you have been able to do and how you feel afterwards. This will help you identify which activities make you feel tired and areas to focus on. Discuss these with your Rehab Specialist on your weekly call

Talk this through with your Rehab Specialist



"Think of your energy like money in a bank. If you spend it all at once, you will have nothing left for the rest of the day, so it needs to be spent carefully."

When to seek advice

A small number of people can develop a more chronic form of tiredness called Chronic Fatigue or Post Viral Fatigue Syndrome. The signs that this is developing are:

- Tiredness that is not getting better over weeks and months as we would expect
- Feeling incredibly tired one to two days after doing any increase in activity
- Not feeling refreshed after a good night's sleep
- Feeling a bit confused or feeling lightheaded / faint as you get up

This condition needs to be managed differently and you must not try to exercise through the tiredness. It is important you talk to your GP if you feel you are having all of these signs so we can make sure you are getting the best treatment.

How exercise helps recovery

Exercise is key to your rehabilitation process as it supports improvements in both your physical and emotional health, and is proven to speed up the recovery process.

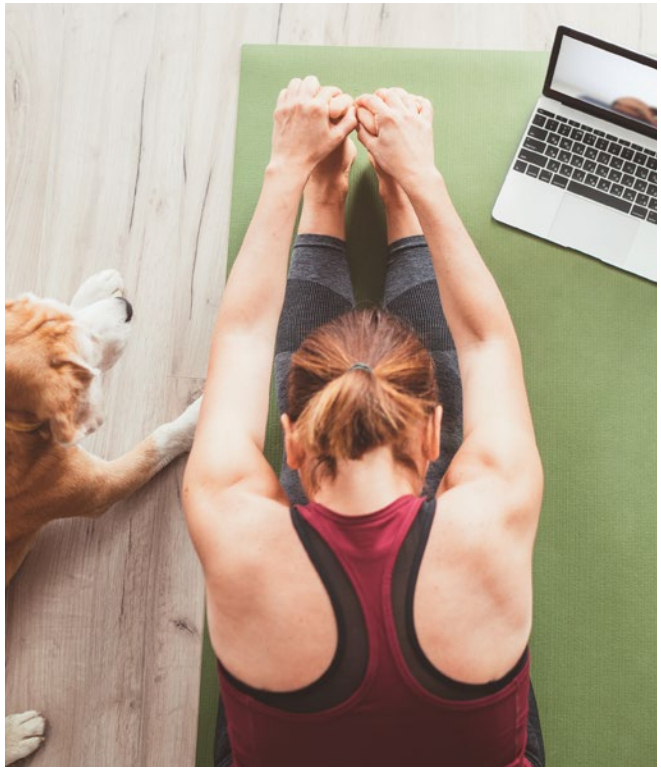
Muscle strength

It's likely that COVID-19 has limited the amount of activity that you can do on a daily basis. You may have spent time in hospital, unable to leave your bed. Because of this your muscles will have been impacted both in their strength and the way that they support your metabolism.

Strengthening exercises can help repair and rebuild muscle and will be an important part of your recovery and getting you back to where you want to be.

Heart and lung health

COVID-19 can have a big impact on the lungs as well as making the heart work harder than it usually would. You may have noticed this yourself, potentially feeling more tired than usual and breathless. Regular exercise helps to improve the way that the body uses oxygen so that the heart and breathing muscles can work more efficiently.



Emotional wellbeing

Many elements of COVID-19 can impact your emotional wellbeing, from the illness itself to related aspects such as self-isolation, access to your favourite activities as well as work and family anxieties. Your illness may have caused you stress and impacted your mood. Your mind and body are inextricably linked and therefore exercise can help. Exercise releases endorphins into your body, helping you feel happier and calmer, helping to protect against stress and anxiety.

Social interaction

COVID-19 has significantly changed the way we interact with one-another and for many has been completely isolating. Your rehabilitation programme will be a great way for you to connect and interact with new people and, importantly, people that have been through the same experience as you and can relate to how you may be feeling.

By progressing your rehab journey together, we hope that the social element of the programme will help to keep you motivated but most of all ensure that you enjoy your activity and maintain those positive habits in the future.

"Regular exercise helps to improve the way that the body uses oxygen so that the heart and breathing muscles can work more efficiently."

Types of exercise that you will undertake

Cardiovascular
Good for: supporting heart and lung health and improving general fitness through low-impact exercises.

Mobility
Good for: increasing your range of motion and supporting your flexibility and mobility.

Strength
Good for: improving your overall muscle strength and endurance, making daily activities easier.

Functional
Good for: supporting you to achieve the activities you require most in your day-to-day life.

Weeks 1-6	Weeks 7-12
Guided exercise at home	**Supported exercise at the gym**

Eating for recovery

A well-balanced diet is essential for recovery, supporting our immune system and to keep the body and mind strong and healthy.

A loss of or change to normal smell and taste senses due to COVID-19 can make your eating experience less enjoyable, which could affect your appetite and nutritional intake. It's important that you continue to eat well, as the right foods and nutrients can give us energy to stay active throughout the day, support our immune system and improve our health.

What should I eat to help my recovery?

As part of a balanced diet, there are certain foods that can help improve the longer-term symptoms of COVID-19.

Fatigue

Extreme tiredness is a common symptom following COVID-19. Eating a healthy diet can stabilise energy levels reducing the feeling of fatigue. Eating foods low in sugar and high in fibre with some protein will give you more sustained energy over a prolonged period of time.

Protein and fibre slow the digestion process meaning that glucose is absorbed into the blood at a slower rate. Protein also lowers the effect of the hunger hormone ghrelin and boosts the satiety hormone peptide.

Muscle Loss

Being inactive or bedridden when suffering from COVID-19 may have led to muscle loss. Exercise will predominantly be needed to build up muscle mass again, however having sufficient protein within your diet will aid this. Aim to include a source of protein with each meal.

Healthier lungs

Many people continue to feel breathless for some time after being acutely unwell. A balanced diet with lots of variety can help prevent infections and keep your lungs healthy. The right nutrients in your diet can help you breathe easier and some foods may help support lung function and reduce asthma symptoms.

Vitamin D plays an important role in boosting immune system responses and helps to reduce airway inflammation. Good sources of vitamin D include: fortified milk, salmon, orange juice and eggs.

Vitamin E may help decrease the risk of some asthma symptoms like coughing or wheezing. Sources of vitamin E include: almonds, raw seeds, Swiss chard, mustard greens, kale, broccoli and hazelnuts.

It's also important to keep your body hydrated. The reccommended daily fluid intake is between 6-8 glasses (1.2 litres). Hydration is key to digestion and enables the body to better absorb nutrients from food. Limit your intake of drinks that can dehydrate you such as alcohol, caffeinated coffee, tea, and fizzy drinks.

Making good food choices

Eat more fruits and vegetables
- Packed with vitamins and minerals and low in calories
- Rich in fibre to promote a healthy gut
- Helps to reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke and some cancers such as bowel cancer

Don't ditch carbohydrates but choose wholegrains
- The body's main source of energy
- High in fibre slowing the digestion and absorption of food, preventing blood sugar spikes

Add protein to meals and snacks
- Essential for growth and repair of the body and maintenance of good health

Choose healthy fats
- Needed for energy, to absorb vitamins, and to protect your heart and brain health
- Healthy fats play a huge role in helping you manage your mood, fight fatigue and even control your weight
- Monounsaturated fats such as avocado and nuts help protect our hearts by maintaining levels of 'good' cholesterol. Polyunsaturated fats such as oily fish can help to lower 'bad' cholesterol

Minimise processed foods
- Processed foods are foods you don't cook from scratch They can be higher in saturated fats and sugars. Always check the label using the green, amber, red traffic light system – the more green, the healthier the choice

The healthy eating plate

My shopping list

These healthy foods will keep you on the right track to recovery and make you feel fuller for longer. Aim to include as many as you can in your weekly shop:

- **Good carbohydrates:**
  Porridge oats, bananas, wholegrain cereals, wholemeal bread and pasta, brown rice, sweet potatoes
- **Lean proteins:**
  Chicken, lean meat, salmon, tuna, eggs, milk, kidney beans, nuts, seeds, lentils, cereals, quinoa, tofu, greek yogurt and cottage cheese
- **Healthy fats:**
  Olive oil, oily fish, plant-based spreads, avocados, soya beans, almonds, brazils, walnuts, flaxseeds
- **Fruit and vegetables:**
  Aim to eat a rainbow, different coloured fruit and vegetables provide different vitamins and minerals. Examples are leafy green vegetables, broccoli, carrots, red peppers, tomatoes, bananas, blueberries, citrus fruit

For further advice, talk to your Rehab Specialist

Having trouble sleeping?

Sleep disruption is a common symptom following COVID-19. Improving the quality of your sleep can help your body recover from physical health conditions and learning to manage your sleep well is an important part of your rehabilitation.

Why can't I sleep?

Health conditions can have a number of negative impacts on sleep. Sleep can be disrupted by many physical symptoms and pain. Worrying about your health can cause difficulty falling asleep or can wake you up in the middle of the night.

Low mood can make it more difficult to fall asleep or get enough sleep, and can also make your sleep less restorative, so you wake up feeling tired. Excessive anger and frustration can also make it difficult to relax enough for proper sleep.

Sleep disruptions can have a negative impact on your recovery. Fatigue due to inadequate sleep can worsen symptoms. When you are feeling exhausted, it can be more difficult to motivate yourself to engage in self-care.

How can I improve my sleep?

There are many actions you can take improve your sleep:

◆ Set a regular sleep/wake schedule

Having regular hours for getting up and going to bed can help set your "internal clock." Most people are unaware of the importance of having a fixed wake-up time, to "jump-start" their internal clock. It is more important to establish a fixed wake-up time than bedtime: we can control what time we wake up, but we can't make ourselves fall asleep!

If you're having problems falling asleep, don't go to bed too early, you shouldn't get into bed until you're sleepy. Also, it's a good idea to try to reduce daytime naps. Short daytime naps, although of benefit for individuals who don't have sleeping problems, can make sleep problems worse.

Napping during the day decreases the restorative value – or quality – of your sleep at night. Your goal is to increase the quality of sleep you receive at night, and one main way to do this is to condense all sleep to night-time hours.

◆ Reduce sleep-interfering activities

There are some common activities that disrupt sleep. Things to reduce are:

Caffeine, alcohol and tobacco – It's particularly important to avoid these in the few hours before sleep, or if you wake during the night.

Exercise before sleep – Regular exercise can help your body get ready for sleep at night. However, strenuous exercise in the few hours before sleep may have the opposite effect.

Watching TV or reading in bed – Try not to have a TV in the bedroom and if you read, keep the lights dim.

◆ Make your bedroom sleep-inducing

It can be helpful to create a pleasant environment for sleep. Use blinds or heavy curtains to create a dark room. Turn off phone ringers.

◆ Make 'going to bed' a soothing experience

If you are having trouble sleeping, or wake up and cannot go back to sleep, stay out of bed until you feel sleepy. Create a pre-sleep routine that you follow each night, which helps you get ready for bed. Having a routine signals to your brain and body that it's time to quiet down. This may include some form of meditation or relaxation, a warm bath or herbal teas.

Get yourself ready for the next day, dim the lights and then mentally 'put away' any ongoing problems or upcoming tasks. Practicing relaxation may help soothe you when going to bed.

◆ Manage your worry

If you find that worry makes it hard to fall asleep or wakes you up during the night, you might find it useful to try the worry postponement activity in this workbook on page 33.

Is your sleep environment friendly?

Remove the TV, computer and other mind-stimulating blue light. Omit tech from the bedroom and wind down with an old-fashioned paper book instead

Keep a torch beside your bed. so you won't need to turn on brighter lights during night time bathroom breaks

Turn down the thermostat at night. Most people sleep better in temps around 18-20°C, though your ideal may fall between 12°C and 24°C

Make your bed every morning. Research shows that people who do may sleep better at night

Set your alarm clock display to 'dim' or turn the clock away from your face. If your phone is your alarm clock, flip it face down. Artificial light can disrupt your body's sleep clock

Replace the mattress every 10 years, pillows every two years. This helps with comfort and allergen build-up

Bed down pets in a different room. or at least keep them out of your bed. Their movements can disrupt sleep and their dander can trigger allergies

Emotional wellbeing

Focusing on your emotional health

Experiencing COVID-19 can impact on your emotional health as well as your physical health and it can take time to recover emotionally from a critical illness.

The impact on your emotional health is wide ranging and symptoms can include:

Anxiety	Social problems
Depression	Memory loss
Sleep problems	Sensory change including vision, hearing, taste and smell
Fatigue	
Pain	Post-traumatic stress symptoms such as fear, hallucinations, nightmares and anger
Stigma and fear of contaminating others	

It is not unusual to experience feelings of stress, anxiety (worry, fear) or depression (low mood, sadness). Ongoing symptoms of fatigue, pain, and sleep disruption can further impact your mood and sense of self and you may find it difficult to do things that you once could do very easily eg walking. These are understandable reactions which for some people can start to cause difficulties in themselves.

Within this section of the journal we will consider these difficulties and look at techniques to better manage your emotional wellbeing. You will be able to discuss these with your Rehab Specialist on your weekly calls.

Understanding COVID-19 related trauma

Many people (20-30% of patients) who were seriously ill and hospitalised due to COVID-19 experience symptoms of trauma related to their hospital stay. Some patients will have no memory of their time in hospital. This can be very confusing and disorienting. Others can find it very distressing to think about it because they may have found it a very frightening experience.

Being surrounded by staff in protective equipment may leave you feeling anxious and frightened. Memories or dreams of the hospital stay can come to you even if you do not want them to, or you may experience difficult thoughts related to your survival. Whatever your memories, it can take some time to recover emotionally from a critical illness.

Delirium

It is common for patients who are critically ill to experience delirium during a hospital stay. Delirium is a name for feeling very confused, like being in a nightmare, but it feels very real at the time. Someone with delirium may hallucinate (seeing, hearing, or feeling things that don't exist outside their mind). They can imagine they are in different situations, and these are often very frightening. Hallucinations or unusual experiences like this are commonly experienced during hospitalisation and are not a sign of a serious mental ill health.

Delirium can have effects which last weeks or months after discharge and can impact on recovery. When you feel able, it may be helpful for you to:

1. **Piece together what happened to you. Friends or relatives may be able to help with this process**
2. **Get in touch with the hospital to ask if staff have time to explain the treatment you had**
3. **If available, take time to read your 'patient diary' of your stay**

If you are experiencing difficulties with muddled, intrusive memories or nightmares three to six months into your recovery, contact your GP for advice.

How has COVID-19 impacted on my emotional health?

Write down any changes you have noticed or your thoughts and feelings in the following areas:

Talk these through with your Rehab Specialist

MOOD	SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

SLEEP	MEMORY AND CONCENTRATION

RELATIONSHIPS	SENSES

Introducing the '4 Corners of Me'

Within this programme we will be looking at different aspects of your psychological recovery using a model that looks at how your thoughts, emotions, physical feelings and behaviours are connected and related to what is going on around you.

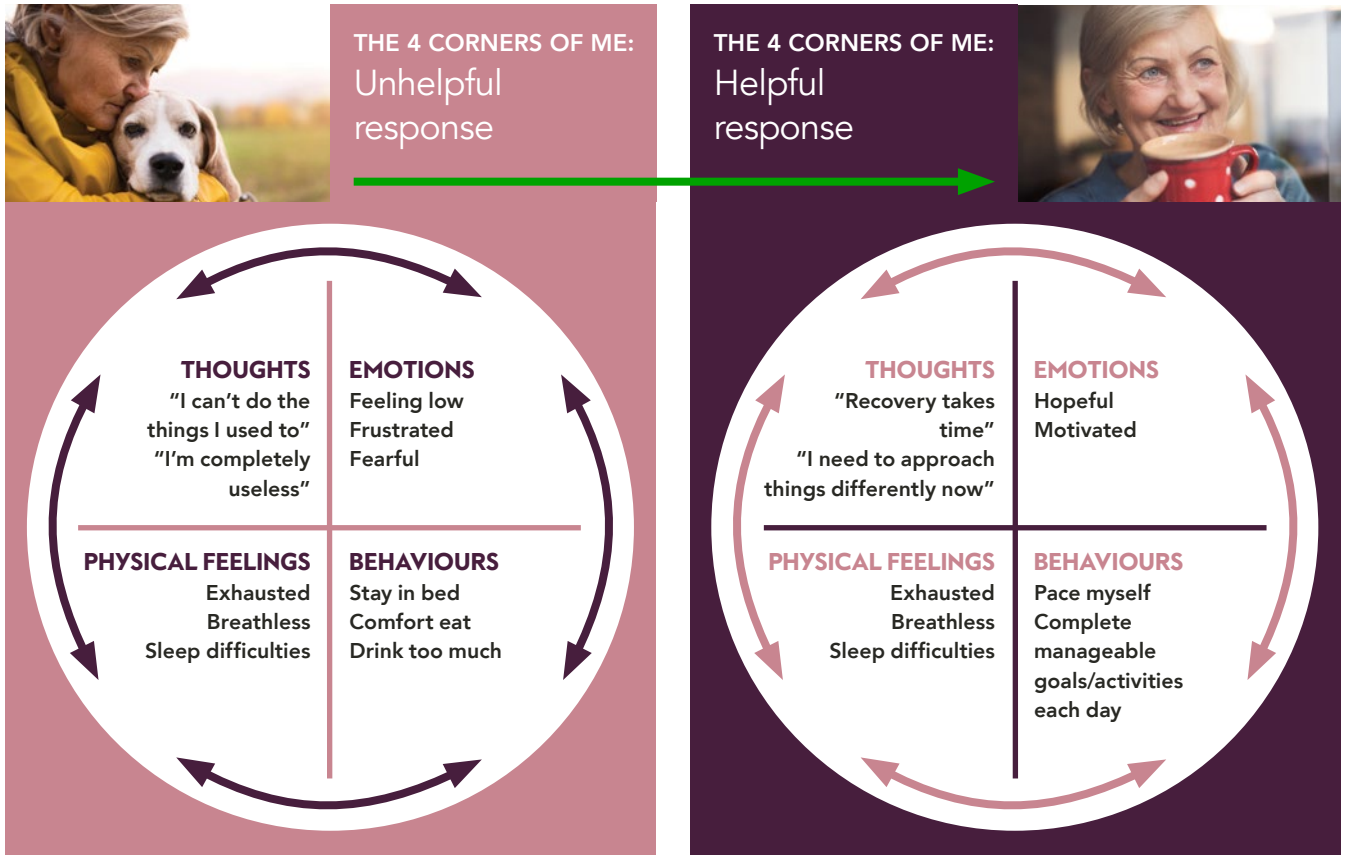
This model can help you make sense of overwhelming problems by breaking them down into smaller parts. Problems are broken down into '4 Corners of Me':

Thoughts	Emotions
Physical feelings	Behaviours

The model is based on the concept of these '4 Corners' being interconnected and affecting each other. For example, your thoughts about a certain situation can often affect how you feel both physically and emotionally, as well as how you act in response.

The interaction between these '4 Corners' can be helpful and work to support your recovery. Sometimes, however, when we have been unwell, unhelpful patterns can develop which can get in the way of your recovery.

Look at the two examples illustrated. Which example most closely resembles your approach to starting this rehabilitation programme?



Understanding my own connections

What are your current thoughts, emotions, behaviours and physical feelings about starting this programme and recovering from COVID-19?

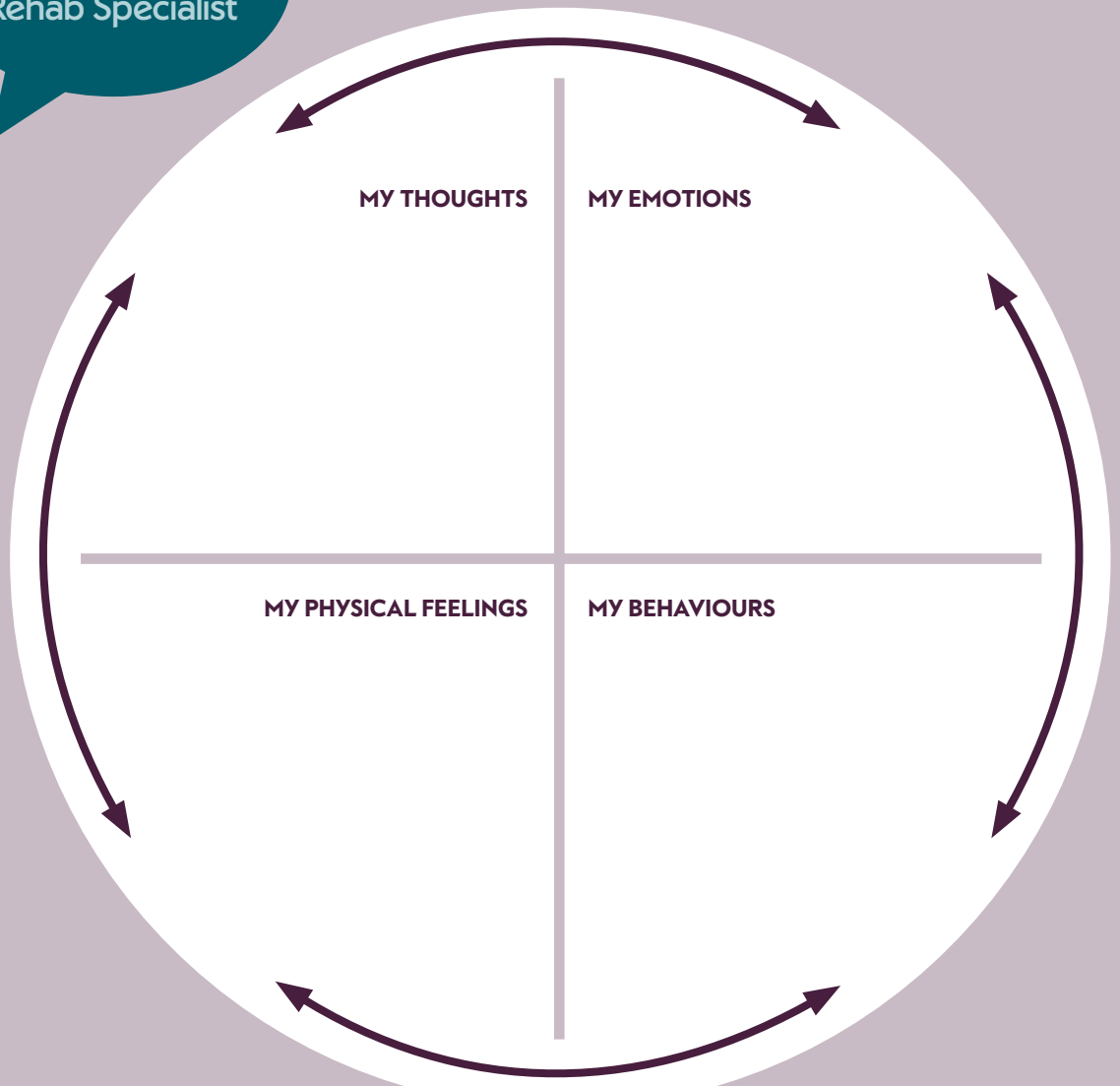
- **Thoughts** – What thoughts come into your mind about life after COVID-19? What are you saying to yourself?
- **Emotions** – What emotions or moods do you experience when you think about life now?
- **Behaviours** – Has your behaviour changed due to your illness? If so, what's different?
- **Physical feelings/symptoms** – What physical symptoms are most obvious when you think about starting on this programme?

Think about how these four areas interact. How does the way you think affect how you feel emotionally? How does the way you behave affect your physical feelings? How does your emotion impact on your behaviour? How do your physical symptoms affect your mood?

Understanding these connections is a great way to help identify any unhelpful cycles, which you can work on with your Rehab Specialist using the exercises within this journal.

For further advice, watch the '4 Corners of Me' webinar on the Rehab Hub

Talk these through with your Rehab Specialist



Mood changes: managing anxiety

Research shows that mood changes are very common following COVID-19, with many people experiencing anxiety and low mood.

Many people experience low mood, stress, anxiety, nightmares and intrusive memories of being unwell. Despite no longer having COVID-19, people can feel embarrassed or have fears that they may contaminate others. These are all completely normal responses after experiencing a serious illness. The main mood changes experienced are anxiety and low mood.

Symptoms of anxiety

Anxiety can be triggered when we are dealing with difficult situations and recovery from COVID-19 presents many challenges. Most commonly anxiety is experienced in response to breathlessness and worry. Common symptoms include:

- **Physical** – You may experience restlessness, a racing heartbeat, perspiration, nausea, shakiness, rapid breathing, dizziness and more frequent visits to the toilet.
- **Thoughts** – Anxiety often presents with negative thought processes such as 'Something bad is going to happen' or 'I may have a panic attack'. You may think there is something really wrong with you or that you'll make a fool of yourself.
- **Emotions** – You may feel worry, dread, fear, panic or embarassment more easily and often.
- **Behaviours** – You may find yourself avoiding situations you associate with panic preferring to 'hide away'. You may find yourself seeking reassurance more from others and doing things that make you feel 'safe'.

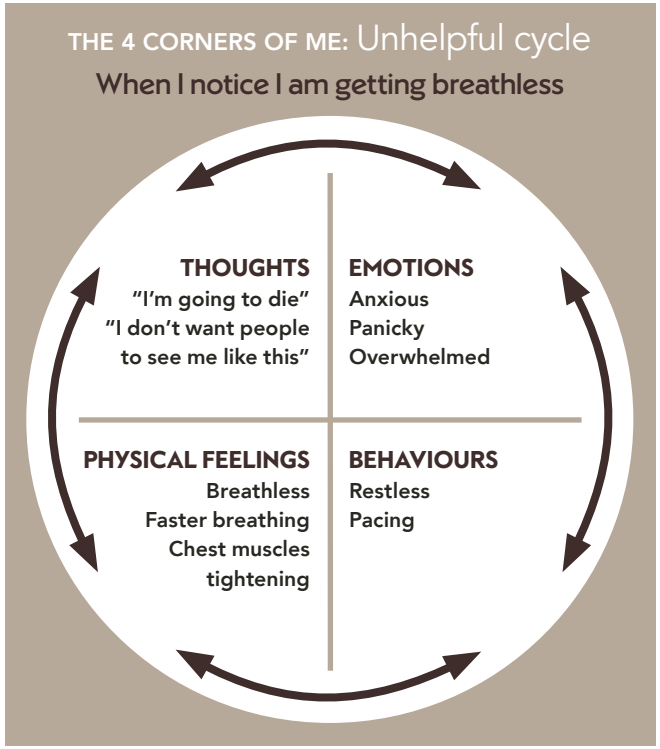
Anxiety and breathlessness

Breathlessness is a common side effect of COVID-19. Dealing with breathlessness can be stressful and frustrating. Being really out of breath can be frightening and many people feel anxious about what is happening. The biggest problem with fear and anxiety is that these feelings make people feel more out of breath. Getting more out of breath can then make people feel more anxious and it becomes a vicious circle.

Practising breathing techniques (see pages 10-13), managing your stressful thoughts, mindfulness and relaxation can all help with managing anxiety and breaking any unhelpful patterns. Tell yourself firmly helpful thoughts such as "I am going to be okay", or "My breathing will calm down.

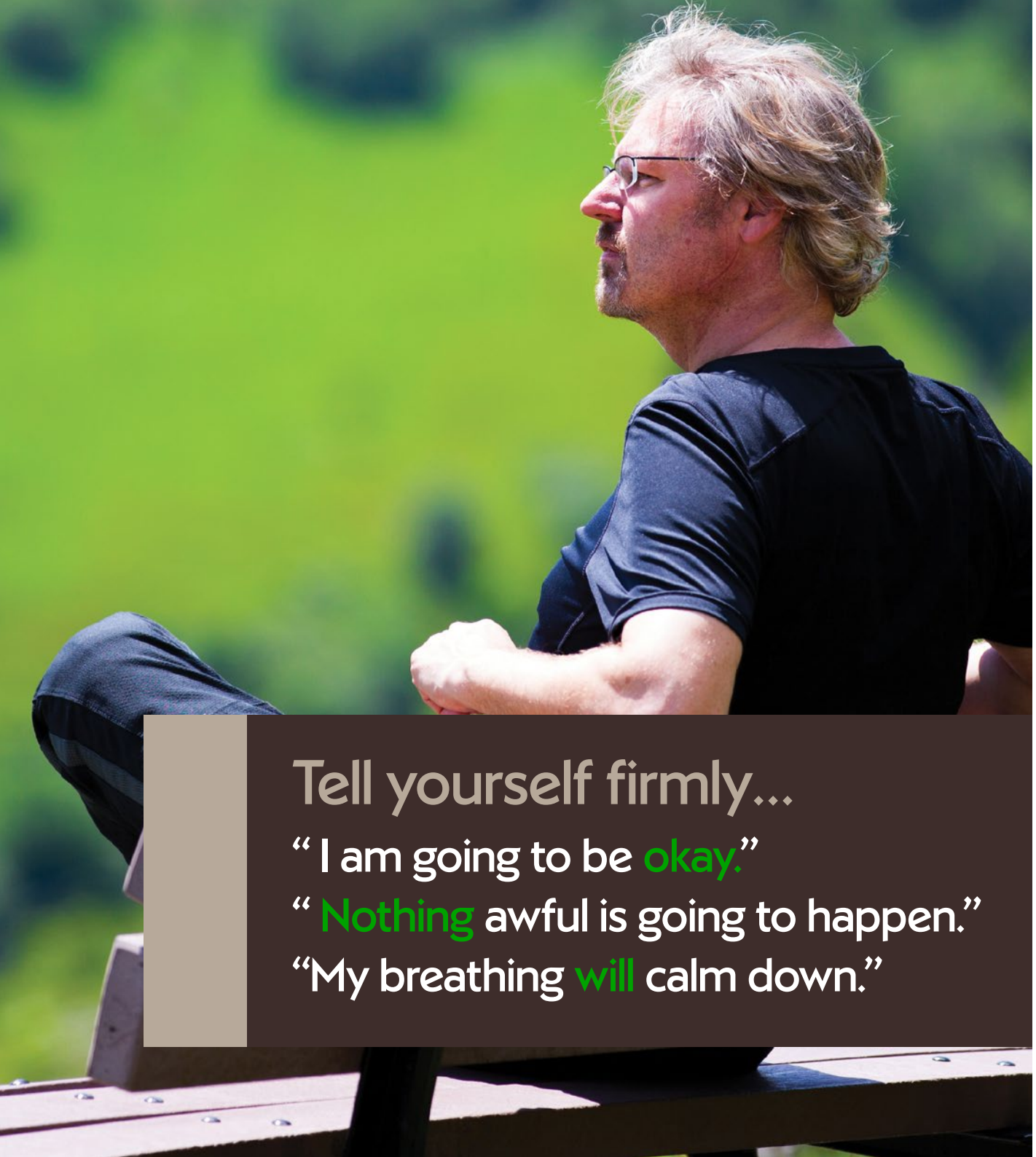
How can I tell if I'm experiencing panic?

- Intense fear and anxiety that usually comes on fairly suddenly but goes down after a short time
- Strong thoughts that something bad is about to happen
- Accompanied with physical symptoms such as increased heart rate, perspiration, shakiness and light headedness



The 4 Corners model can help you to understand the mind – body – mood connection and how breathlessness and anxiety can become a vicious cycle.

For further guidance, watch the 'Anxiety and Breathlessness' webinar on the Rehab Hub



Tell yourself firmly...

" I am going to be okay."

" Nothing awful is going to happen."

"My breathing will calm down."

Helpful thoughts to combat my anxiety

Getting caught up in unhelpful thinking patterns can increase anxiety and make breathlessness worse. It may be useful to try some helpful thoughts. Here are a few suggestions you could try. Write down any of your own that you find helpful in the box below.

- **This difficult time will pass**
- **Stress and worry will make me even shorter of breath, I need to do some relaxation**
- **I can try different good breathing positions**
- **I have had worsened breathlessness before, and it then became better**
- **Even though I am breathless I am still breathing in oxygen**

"By learning to postpone your worry, it will be less intrusive in your life and give you a greater sense of control."

Worry

Worry is a common symptom of anxiety and can occur at any time or place, often without you being aware of its exact triggers. It can be very tiring and can interfere with your quality of life. Strategies to deal with this are 'effective problem solving' and 'worry postponement'. The chart below will help you to decide which strategy to use.

Worry postponement

Typically, people think they won't be able to postpone their worrying, but are often surprised they can. Making your worry wait for a worry zone, will help it to feel less intrusive and give you a greater sense of control.

Worry postponement may feel like a strange thing to do, and it may seem like an effort to commit to sitting and reflecting on the days worries at a set time every day. But it's important to start this way and with time and practice, you will be able to do it effectively, in a more relaxed way.

Worry time: worry postponement

Talk these through with your Rehab Specialist

1 Create a worry zone

Choose a particular time, place and length of time for worrying. This should be the same everyday eg 6pm, kitchen, 20 minutes.

- Make this place comfortable and free from distractions. Try not to choose somewhere you go regularly, like a lounge chair. Instead somewhere you assign for the worry period
- The time should be convenient and not close to bedtime. Note your worry zone below as a reminder

My worry zone time:

Length of worry time:

Place:

2 Postpone your worry

As soon as you become aware of a worry, postpone it to the worry period.

- Note your worry briefly on a piece of paper (in a couple of words)
- Remind yourself that you will have time to think about it later, no need to worry about it now. You will be in a better position to deal with it in the worry period
- Turn your focus to the present moment and activities of the day. This will help let go of the worry until the worry period
- Finally, decide what is the most important thing you can do for yourself right now. Do something that is either practical, positive, pleasant or nuturing

3 Come back to your worries at the delegated worry period

When your worry period comes around, settle yourself at the place you have planned and take some time to reflect on the worries you have written down from the day.

- Only worry about the things you have noted if you feel you must
- If all or some of the worries you wrote down are no longer bothering you or no longer seem relevant, then no further action is needed
- If you do need to worry about some of them, spend no longer then the set amount of time you specified for your worry period. Consider writing your thoughts on paper rather than worrying in your head

Mood changes: managing low mood

People recovering from COVID-19 often describe having times when they feel low or down. Most commonly low mood is associated with a reduction in activities and unhelpful thoughts.

Everyone experiences low mood at times in their life. Low mood may be mild and only last a short time, with little impact on your life, or it may be more severe and hold you back from getting on with your life. People recovering from COVID-19 often describe having times when they feel low or down.

Your mood may be affected by frustrations about not yet being able to return to your daily activities the way you would like to.

In turn, these difficult feelings can affect your ability to engage with daily activities, particularly if you are less motivated because of the difference between your expectations and what is achievable.

Managing low mood is therefore an important part of your overall recovery. Most commonly low mood is associated with a reduction in activities and unhelpful thoughts.

THE 4 CORNERS OF ME: Unhelpful cycle

When I'm experiencing low mood

What keeps your mood low?

The way you think about yourself, how you spend your time and how you feel physically can all be affected by low mood. Changes in these areas can then lead to your mood worsening, creating a vicious circle. Events can sometimes build up and snowball to feel overwhelming. Look at the example above to see how this happens.

Activities to boost your mood

When people are feeling low they often stop doing the things they used to do. This is especially the case when recovery feels overwhelming.

At first, doing less of certain things may help you feel better. You may feel relief around not picking up the phone to a friend or may feel better about not completing household tasks. Doing less of certain activities is a normal 'self-defence' type coping response, especially if you are already feeling exhausted and overwhelmed by the tasks of recovery. Overtime however you may find yourself doing less and less of these activities.

In the long term, stopping doing certain activities, and withdrawing from social interaction can have a negative effect on your mood.

Recovery from COVID-19 means it can be really difficult to do certain activities and daily routines can seem overwhelming. So it can be helpful to start off with doing just a little at a time. Planning activities can help you start to do things you may have stopped.

There are different types of activity that we do in our lives. It is important to find a balance of doing these types of activities, by setting small, realistic and manageable activity goals. Sometimes it can take several weeks of gradually increasing a balance of activities before you notice an improvement in your mood. Keep going. Remember these things take time and practice.

Activities to boost your mood

Fill in the chart below for a week with details of activities you do to look after yourself focusing on Body Care, Achievements, Connections and Enjoyment

Talk these through with your Rehab Specialist

EXAMPLES	
Body Care	Healthy breakfast – Early night
Achievements	Paid bills – Phoned the bank
Connections	Phoned my friend – Romantic dinner
Enjoyment	Watched a movie – Took some photos

MONDAY	
Body Care	
Achievements	
Connections	
Enjoyment	

TUESDAY	
Body Care	
Achievements	
Connections	
Enjoyment	

WEDNESDAY	
Body Care	
Achievements	
Connections	
Enjoyment	

THURSDAY	
Body Care	
Achievements	
Connections	
Enjoyment	

FRIDAY	
Body Care	
Achievements	
Connections	
Enjoyment	

SATURDAY	
Body Care	
Achievements	
Connections	
Enjoyment	

SUNDAY	
Body Care	
Achievements	
Connections	
Enjoyment	

How thoughts change your mood

Your mood may be affected by frustrations about not yet being able to return to your daily activities the way you would like to.

Unhelpful thoughts

Following serious illness, or a period of recovery, when people are unable to do their usual activities thinking patterns can change and they begin to have unhelpful thoughts.

Unhelpful thoughts tend to be negative (about the self or the future) such as 'I'm useless' or 'I'll never get better', and they undermine rather than build self confidence and demotivate rather than motivate towards recovery.

Look out for unhelpful thoughts that might be keeping you in that vicious circle. These can seem to pop into your head automatically so you have to work hard to notice them. You might recognise some of these styles of thinking when you feel low.

Look out for these unhelpful thoughts and ask yourself:

- Am I being fair to myself?
- What's the evidence that this is true?
- What's the evidence that it may not be entirely true?
- What would a friend say if I said that out loud?
- What would I say to my friend if they said that?
- Is there a more balanced way of thinking about this?

For further guidance, watch the 'Thinking' webinar on the Rehab Hub

Unhelpful thinking styles

Labeling
Giving labels to yourself or others

Personalisation
Blaming yourself for something that was not your fault

All or nothing
Things are all good or all bad

Catastrophising
Thinking about the worst thing that can happen

Magnification/ Minimisation
Thinking things are bigger or smaller than they are

Overgeneralisation
Using words like always, never, nothing

Should-ing
Using words like 'should' and 'must' can make you feel guilty

Doesn't count
Not giving yourself credit for the things you have done

Filtering
Only paying attention to the good or bad things

Jumping to conclusions
Thinking you can read people's minds or know the future

It may be helpful to keep a diary of events, feelings and thoughts. Use the approaches described to gain more balanced thoughts and look out for unhelpful thinking styles. We've given you an example below:

EVENT	FEELING OR EMOTION	THOUGHTS IN YOUR MIND	UNHELPFUL THINKING STYLE	MORE HELPFUL THOUGHTS
A neighbour ignored me	Low and depressed	She doesn't like me – nobody does	Jumping to conclusions	She's probably got something on her mind She's usually friendly

Problems, memory & thinking clearly

It is very common for people who have been unwell with COVID-19 to experience difficulties with attention, memory and thinking clearly.

After a severe illness, especially if you had a breathing tube in hospital, you may suffer from difficulties with attention, remembering things and thinking clearly. These difficulties may go away within weeks or months, but for some people they can last longer term.

It is important for you and your family to recognise if you are having these difficulties, as they can have an impact on your relationships, daily activities and your return to work or education.

If you are experiencing any these difficulties, the following strategies may help:

- **Physical exercise** can help your brain recover. While this may be difficult if you are experiencing weakness, breathlessness or fatigue, try gradually introducing gentle exercise into your daily routine. The cardio, mobility and strengthening exercises in this programme are a good place to start. See pages 55-57.
- **Brain exercises** such as new hobbies or activities, puzzles, word and number games, memory exercises and reading may help. Start with brain exercises that challenge you but are achievable and increase the difficulty as you are able. This is important for keeping you motivated.
- **Prompt yourself** with lists, notes and alerts, such as phone alarms, that can remind you of things you need to do such as putting the rubbish bins out.
- **Break down activities** into individual steps to avoid feeling overwhelmed. The 'Pace, Plan, Prioritise' technique on page 16 may help with this.

Helping your emotional recovery

Physical exercise can help your brain recover

Brain exercises can improve memory and attention

Prompt yourself with lists, notes and alarms to aid memory

Break down activities into smaller steps to avoid feeling overwhelmed

Effective problem solving

We encounter problems, sometimes on a day-to-day basis which might be quite minor or may be more worrisome. Rather than avoiding problems and hoping they will go away, problems need to be worked through and ideally resolved.

Some problems can make us feel overwhelmed and stuck like we are unable to cope, even though we may be good at problem solving at other times in our lives.

Effective problem solving is an evidence based approach with clear steps to help you see a problem differently and help you to find and assess different possible solutions. See the six steps model opposite and try filling in the worksheet.

The six steps of 'Effective problem solving'

1 Evaluate the problem
What is its cause? What are the signs there's a problem at all?

2 Gather information
Gather all of the information you need to help you solve the problem.

3 Break the problem down
One big problem can be split into several smaller more manageable problems.

4 Identify solutions
Next, you identify various options for solutions. What are some good ideas to solve this?

5 Select the best solution
Evaluate your options. What is the best option to solve the problem? What's the easiest option? How should you prioritize?

6 Take action
Finally, action your chosen solution. Does it solve the problem? Is there another option you need to try?

Talk these through with your Rehab Specialist

Use the worksheet below to help you practice the steps of problem solving

STEPS TO COMPLETE	MY RESPONSES
1. Write a description of my problem.	
2. What information do I need to solve the problem?	
3. Do I need to break the problem down into smaller parts?	
4. What are all the possible solutions for the problem?	
5. Evaluate and choose the most appropriate option.	
6. Try my chosen solution. How did it go? What did I learn?	

Rebuilding my 'sense of self'

Experiencing a serious illness can impact on your sense of self, including the way you see yourself, your self confidence and your sense of identity.

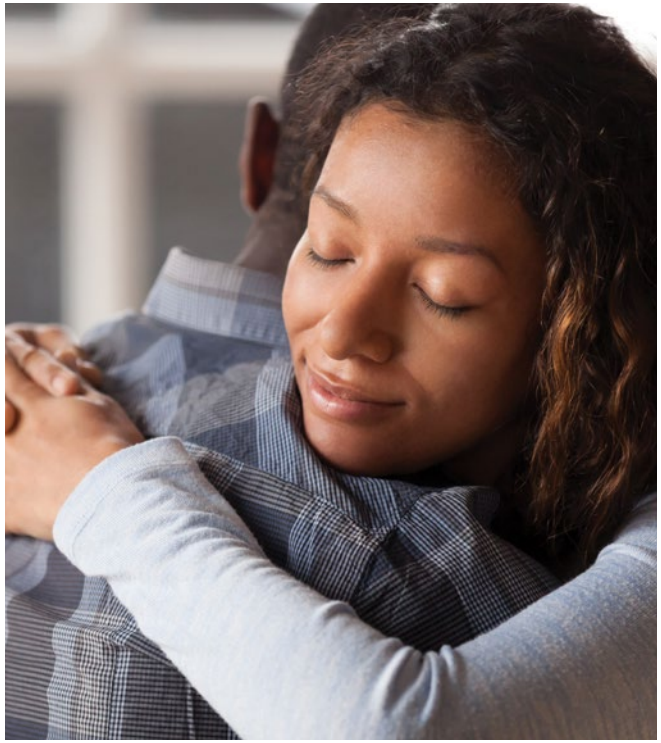
"I don't feel like me anymore"

These are all normal experiences following a serious illness when you may have:

- Lost confidence and trust in own body
- A loss of dignity and control
- Confusion about what is real and experiences caused by medication or delirium
- Are unable to engage in your previous activities
- Changes in your relationships and intimacy

To increase your self-worth after illness or injury can feel like a mammoth task. You've been thrown into this unknown land of serious illness or injury, you may not be able to do what you once did, and you don't know what to do to feel better. You may feel like you have lost control and aren't sure who you are anymore. It's understandable that your confidence takes a nose dive and your self-worth quickly follows.

There are however a number of things you can do to rebuild your sense of self and increase your confidence.



Building positive relationships

Recovering from a serious illness can put pressure on your relationships: some may become strained while others may become closer. As well as coping with your own feelings, you may feel pressure to deal with the emotions of family and friends.

People in rehabilitation often say they feel other people don't understand them. You might have a sense that others expect you to get back to 'normal' soon after treatment. This can be frustrating and feel as if they have no idea what you have been through and continue to go through.

Many people recovering from COVID-19 say that others are careful not to upset them. Sometimes people avoid getting in touch or avoid conversations. This is probably for fear of saying the wrong thing, but it can bring a great sense of loss and isolation.

Some people find their friends react in a way they didn't anticipate: their closest friends may disappear and people they didn't expect to may make the most effort. Communication is important in maintaining relationships.

"Recovering from a serious illness can put pressure on your relationships: some may become strained while others may become closer."

Tips on talking to:

Your partner

- Be honest about how you feel
- Use 'I' statements to focus on you and your feelings rather than your partner's behaviour
- Explain what you need and how your partner can support you
- Don't be afraid to discuss sexual intimacy. Talking, kissing, cuddling and touching are just as important as sexual intercourse. Communication and honesty about concerns are important. Be sensitive to each others needs

Your children

- You know your child best; trust your intuition
- Be as specific and honest as possible
- Use language your youngest child can understand
- Talk to them about any changes to their day-to-day life

Your friends and colleagues

- Let people know how they can support you
- Reassure them they don't need to feel pressured to say the 'right thing'
- Consider asking someone to be a key contact to pass on information, or use social media to update a lot of people quickly

Building a life of purpose and meaning

In order to rebuild your life after illness it can be helpful to think about what you value most in life, and how you can act in ways that help you truly live your values. A value is a life direction, an internal compass which guides us throughout life. Values are different to goals which have an end-point. Values are often life-long giving our lives meaning and purpose.

To identify our values, we can think about what it is in life that is really important to us and gives our life meaning and purpose. Is it our relationships e.g. to be a good parent? Is it our careers, connecting with nature, healthy living, community service or making a difference?

Having identified our values, we know where we want to go in life, the direction we want to progress towards. We might set goals along the way. Knowing our values will help us decide how to react to stress and distress. In spite of how we feel, we can still move in the direction of our values.

Identifying your values

The 'Valued living questionnaire' can help you to identify the values which matter most to you. As you reach each life component, ask yourself how important each of these areas is to your life – regardless of how much time or effort you currently put into them.

- Rate the importance of each component on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being not important at all and 10 being extremely important
- Do your best to rate them honestly, according to your true feelings, not how you think you should rate them
- You'll then use your responses to this questionnaire in an exercise that follows, which will help you move toward engaging in what you value

Valued living questionnaire

LIFE COMPONENT	NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL				MODERATELY IMPORTANT				EXTREMELY IMPORTANT	
Family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Romantic relationships	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Parenting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Friends and social life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Education and training	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Recreation and fun	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Spirituality and religion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Citizenship and community life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Self-care	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Action for change

Talk these through with your Rehab Specialist

This exercise will help you create a more fulfilling life for yourself by formulating intentions and committed actions based on your values. It will help you think about ways to make your life feel more fulfilling based on what you think is important.

Committed action

- Using the Valued living questionnaire left, identify the components of your life that you rated as a 5 or higher (from moderately important to extremely important). Put the names of those areas on the worksheet right
- Think about one intention for each of those valued components, which will help you make your life feel more fulfilling
- Then, identify the actions you are willing to commit to doing stating when you will begin them, that will move you toward your intention

For further guidance, watch the 'Values' webinar on the Rehab Hub

Valued living worksheet

Identify three valued components of your life and when you intend to begin each committed action

A component of my life I value is My intention for this component is	My committed actions include:
A component of my life I value is My intention for this component is	My committed actions include:
A component of my life I value is My intention for this component is	My committed actions include:

Be kind to yourself

Sometimes following a serious illness we can become quite hard on ourselves, especially if we feel unable to do the things we used to do. This often leads to self-criticism which can undermine motivation and recovery.

Self-kindness is important for our wellbeing. We spend more time with ourselves than anyone else and how we relate to ourselves has a huge impact on how we feel. Self-compassion plays a vital role in our mental wellbeing and our bodies also benefit from giving and receiving kindness. Beneficial impacts on the body include the immune and cardiovascular systems, nervous system and even the regulation of our genes.

It's kind of hard sometimes

Despite this, the seemingly simple idea of being kind to yourself can be a difficult concept for some. Many people find it much easier to be compassionate to others than to themselves. Some people confuse kindness with weakness or worry that that being self-compassionate means an attitude where 'anything goes' resulting in lowered self-expectations, standards or achievements.

Some common myths about being kind to oneself include:

- Being self-compassionate means, I will become lazy and won't achieve what I want in life
- Looking after myself is selfish
- Being kind to my self makes me 'soft' or self-indulgent
- Other people are more important than me and need to be my priority
- I don't deserve kindness
- I need to make sure I don't make any mistakes - being self-compassionate will let me off the hook too easily.
- If things get too easy for me I'm asking for trouble

These ideas, whilst understandable, misinterpret the real idea of self-compassion. Self-compassion involves treating oneself kindly, acknowledging that as humans 'we are all in the same boat' and that everybody hurts sometimes. It also means we are motivated to balance our negative thoughts and emotions by acting to relieve our distress.

This isn't however a 'free pass' to act how we like. On the contrary, true self-compassion involves being honest with ourselves and fully accountable for our actions. The difference is that this is done with an understanding of what it really means to be human and the knowledge that no one is perfect.

Kind self talk

Compassionate self-talk involves talking to ourselves the way we would talk to someone whom we love and want to support and encourage. Think about the words you might say to someone else who was experiencing distress, and how you might speak to them. Imagine saying the same phrases to yourself in the same way.

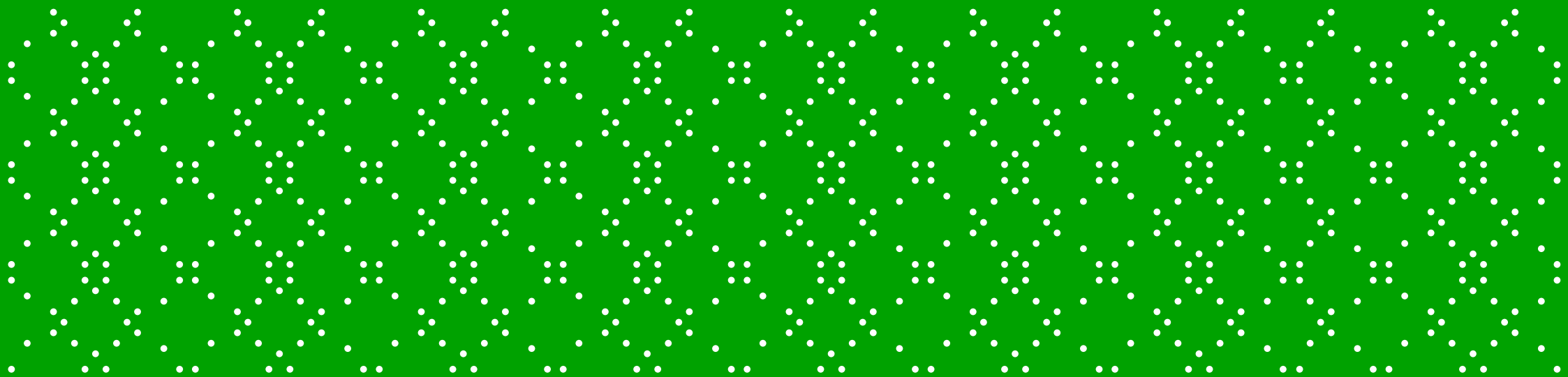
If you notice you are being critical towards yourself it can help to have some compassionate phrases to hand. Think of some statements that most strongly resonate with you. Here are some example phrases:

- **'This is a difficult moment and it will pass'**
- **'I'm deserving of help and direction'**
- **'It's okay to make mistakes and learn from those mistakes'**
- **'I am going to be kind to myself in this moment'**
- **'I deserve kindness'**

You may find speaking to yourself with kindness and compassion is difficult at times. Don't give up. Keep trying, like any new skill it requires practice, but the benefits are worth it. Be patient and be kind to yourself.

Swap common myths for...	...compassionate phrases
"Looking after myself is selfish."	"I'm deserving of help."
"Being kind to my self makes me 'soft' or self-indulgent."	"I'm going to be kind to myself in this moment."
"If things get too easy for me I'm asking for trouble."	"This is a difficult moment and it will pass."

"Self-compassion involves treating oneself kindly, acknowledging that as humans 'we are all in the same boat' and that everybody hurts sometimes."



Recording your activity

Tracking your progress

Use this section to record everything you do within the programme.

Managing your rehabilitation can be less stressful if you set realistic expectations and timeframes for returning to pre-illness activities and track your progress throughout your journey. You should record information about your activity, from goal setting and exercise, to tracking your effort scores.

This will enable your Rehab Specialist to give you the best support and monitor your progress. It will also show you how far you've progressed throughout the programme and give you a real sense of achievement.

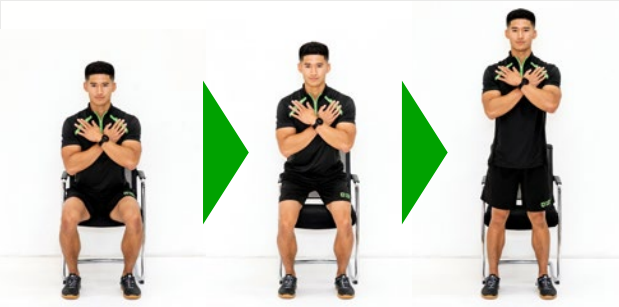
You will find a weekly programme card and activity diary (from page 58 onwards) for each of the 12 weeks of the programme. Complete these and use as the basis for discussion on your weekly call with your Rehab Specialist.

30 Second Sit to Stand

To assess your physical capacity, we need you to complete this test. You will require a chair and a watch or clock with a second hand. If you live with someone, you may wish to have them support you to complete the test.

Find a sturdy chair and place the back of it against a wall to prevent it slipping. Sitting on the chair, stand up to a fully standing position and sit back down to a fully seated position and repeat. Either cross your arms over your chest or use your hands on the arms of the chair to help you stand.

When you are ready, starting in a seated position, complete as many fully sitting to fully standing repetitions as you can in 30 seconds. See examples illustrated below.



Arms crossed over chest

Arms used to help me stand

30 Second Sit to Stand Test

Write the number of full repetitions you complete in 30 seconds and how you completed each test by ticking the options shown. Record your results at the start of the programme and at weeks 6 and 12

START OF PROGRAMME

No. of full repetitions:

☐ **Arms crossed over chest**

☐ **Arms used to help me stand**

WEEK 6

No. of full repetitions:

☐ **Arms crossed over chest**

☐ **Arms used to help me stand**

WEEK 12

No. of full repetitions:

☐ **Arms crossed over chest**

☐ **Arms used to help me stand**

"Managing your rehabilitation and getting back to 'normal life' can be less stressful if you set realistic expectations and timeframes for returning to pre-illness activities."

Achieving your personal goals

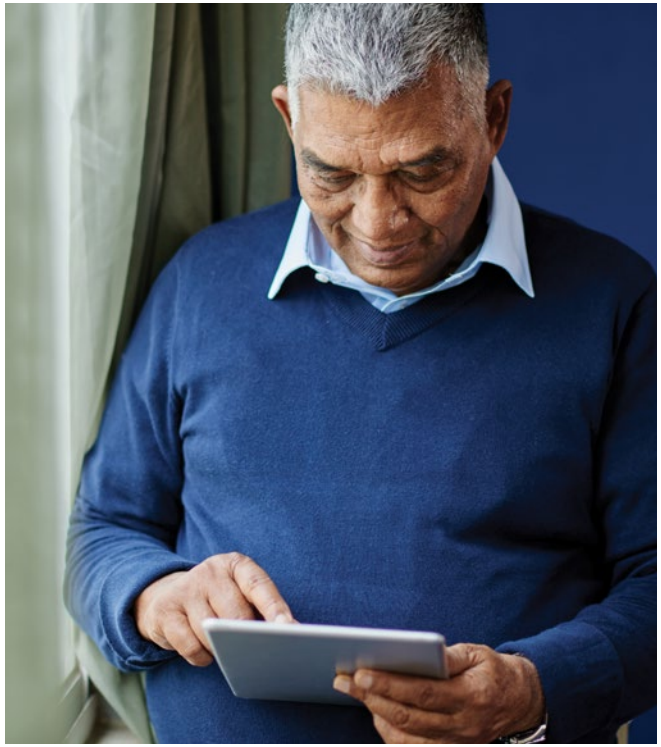
You are now on your own journey back to full health. By setting goals you will have a personal 'destination' to work towards and importantly a path to get you there.

Working on personal goals is in many ways the same as embarking on a long journey, it is difficult to plan your journey without knowing your destination. Top-level athletes, successful businesspeople and high achievers in all fields set goals.

Setting goals gives you both a long-term vision and short-term motivation. It enables you to focus on areas of development and helps you to organise your time and resources so that you can make the most of your journey.

Setting Goals

By setting clearly defined goals, you can measure and take pride in the achievement of those goals, and you'll see continuous progress in what might previously have seemed unachievable. You'll also raise your self-confidence, as you recognise your own ability in achieving the goals that you've set.



You should set your goals on a number of levels:

- **First identify the long-term goals** that you want to achieve. This may be something that is a year or more away.
- **Break these down into the smaller goals** that you must hit to reach your long-term goals. Think about the things that you can do in the next six months, three months, next month, next week and today.
- **Keep operational goals small** Keep the short-term goals that you're working towards small and achievable. If a goal is too large, then it can seem that you are not making progress towards it.
- **State each goal as a positive statement** Express your goals positively. "Perform this exercise technique well" is a much better goal than "Don't make this exercise look stupid"
- **Write goals down** this crystallises them and gives them more force.

"By setting goals you will have a personal 'destination' to work towards and importantly a path to get you there."

My goal tracking card

Fill in the chart starting with your 12 month goal and then identify the smaller goals at 1, 3 and 6 months, that will help you reach this.

MONTH	GOAL	PROGRESS MEASURE	DATE COMPLETED
1	eg. Walk as far as I can at a comfortable pace	Distance walked	
3	eg. Walk a mile at a comfortable pace	Distance and time	
6	eg. Jog a mile at my own pace, stopping less than four times	Distance, time, no.of stops	
12	eg. Run a mile without stopping in under 15 minutes	Distance, time, no.of stops	

Discuss your goals with your Rehab Specialist

The SMART approach

A useful way of making goals more powerful is to use the SMART approach:

S	M	A	R	T
Specific	**Measurable**	**Attainable**	**Relevant**	**Time-bound**
Define the goal as much as possible with no ambiguous language.	Can you track the progress and measure the outcome?	Is the goal reasonable enough to be accomplished? How so?	Is the goal worthwhile and will it meet your needs?	Your objective should include a time limit.

For example, instead of having 'to run a marathon' as a goal, it's more powerful to use the SMART goal 'to have completed a long-distance race by 31st December 2022.' Obviously, this will only be achieved if a lot of preparation (small steps) has been completed beforehand.

Achieving Goals

When you've achieved a goal, take the time to enjoy the satisfaction of having done so. Reflect on the progress that you've made towards other goals and take pride as you do so. If the goal was a significant one, reward yourself appropriately. All of this helps you build the self-confidence you deserve.

How should I feel when exercising?

Recording how hard you feel your body is working when exercising will help to monitor and determine your exercise progression throughout the programme.

When exercising, it's important to monitor your intensity to make sure you're working at a pace that is challenging enough to help you reach your goals, but not so hard that you adversely affect your recovery.

While participating in exercise, either during your scheduled rehabilitation classes or your 'Build your own' session, it is important to keep a record of your perception of effort and how the exercise impacts your health. This perception of effort should take into consideration your breathing and muscle fatigue.

The Nuffield Health scale of effort

The Nuffield Health Scale of Effort enables you to rate how you are feeling when exercising. The table (right) demonstrates how this scale works. It starts at number 0 where you are not using any effort and your breathing is causing you no difficulty at all and progresses through to number 10 where your breathing difficulty is extremely hard and effort is at maximum.

Adapted from the work of Professor Patrick Doherty, University of York.

COLOUR	EFFORT	DESCRIPTION	HOW YOU'LL LIKELY TO FEEL WHILE EXERCISING
	0	No effort	You're exercising but you feel like you normally do when resting
	1	Very easy	You're able to talk normally while exercising
	2	Easy	You're able to walk at a comfortable pace and still talk
	3	Some effort	You will still be able to talk but start to hear yourself breathing
	4	More effort	You can hear yourself breathing louder but not gasping for air
	5	Increased effort	Your talking may become limited
	6	More effort	You can talk but probably just one or two words, but is more challenging.
	7	A lot more effort	Talking continues to be limited to a one word
	8	Hard	You will feel like it is strenuous and fatigued
	9	Very hard	You can't talk and you're reaching for air
	10	Extremely hard	You really want this exercise/activity to end!

How to complete your effort scale

It is important to keep a diary of your effort ratings to monitor your fitness progression. As you become fitter, the same activity will become easier and your effort rating will decrease. Then you'll know it's time to increase your effort.

Record a weekly effort score for your Live streams, On-demand and Build your own exercise sessions. Here's a few tips to help you fill in this record:

- Record the highest score you experienced during this session ie. if during the warm up you scored 4 but during a particular exercise you scored 5, record 5 in this record
- Feel free to use the space to make a note next to the score of what particular exercise/activity caused you to peak at that score
- Your Rehab Specialist will discuss your scores during your 1:1 calls
- These scores will help them determine how to progress your exercises and improve your fitness so try and be as accurate as you can with your scores

My scale of effort

Fill in your scores after every weekly exercise session

WEEK	ONLINE EXERCISE CLASS	ON-DEMAND WORKOUT	'BUILD YOUR OWN'
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			

‘Build your own’ workout

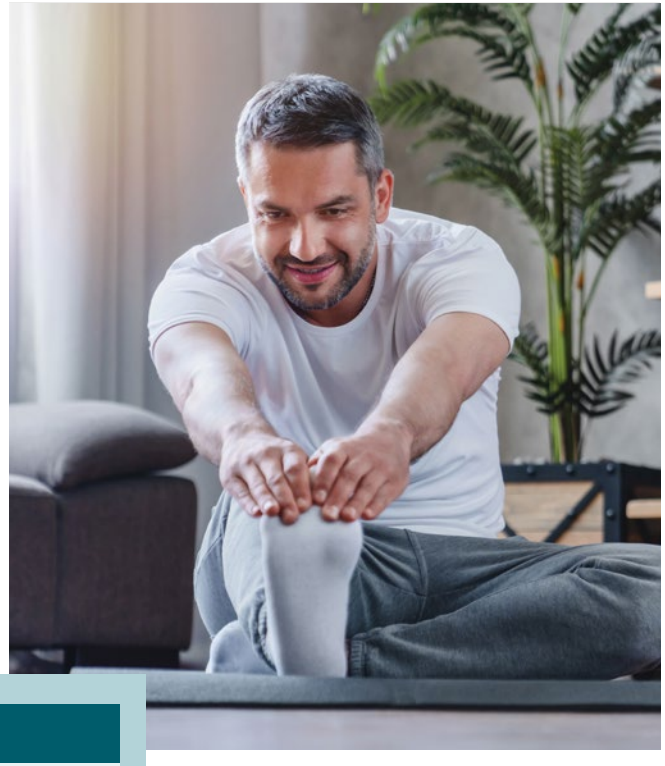
The ‘Build your own’ session is a great opportunity to personalise your workouts and focus on exercises you enjoy.

We have provided you with a library of exercises to select from and complete each week. By working with your Rehab Specialist, you will learn how different types of exercises can aid your recovery and how best to structure these within your very own workout.

During your programme you will begin to understand what each exercise is targeting and how to modify it so that you challenge yourself and progress every week. We hope that the learning you take from this activity will allow you to design and complete exercises in the future, independently and see amazing results.

Example workout card

EXERCISE	DESCRIPTION
Star jump	Jump legs apart
Leg swing	Kicking a football
Single leg balance	Standing still on one leg
Front crawl	Just like swimming



Remember to pick at least three exercises from each category.

How to ‘Build your own’ workout

Look at the exercise images shown on the following pages and pick three from each of the cardio, mobility and strength categories. This will help to create a balanced workout, improving your overall fitness, while still focusing on the areas that are important to you. We’ve given you an example below of how you might do this, but the choice of exercises is up to you.

In the first instance, talk to you Rehab Specialist about which exercises to pick, how to do an exercise and how many of each you should complete. The length of your workout should be the same as your other weekly sessions with the Rehab Specialist.

From page 58 onwards, you’ll find workout cards, where you should list your selected exercises each week, including how many to complete and rest periods. This will help you track your exercises and will make sure you keep progressing each week.

Weeks 7-12

From week 7 onwards, you’ll be attending weekly ‘Build your own’ sessions at your local Nuffield Health fitness & wellbeing centre. The exercises will continue to be chosen by you. Working with your Rehab Specialist, you can advance your favourite exercises and try some new gym equipment or techniques that you may not have had access to at home. Your Rehab Specialist will be available in the gym, each week, at a designated time for advice and support.

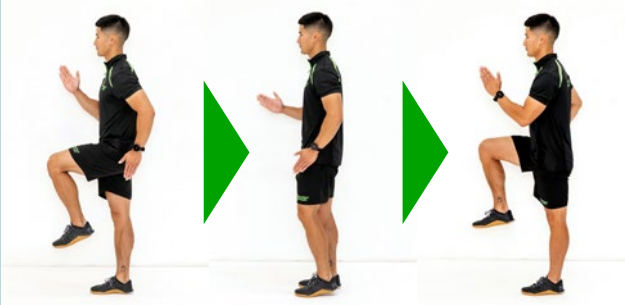
Cardio

Stationary run (chair)

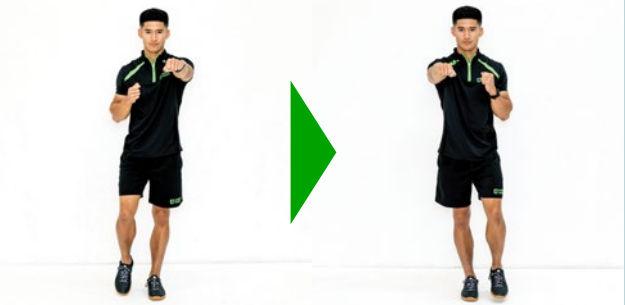
High knee run

Front crawl

Side bend to kickout



Marching



Air punch, toe tap

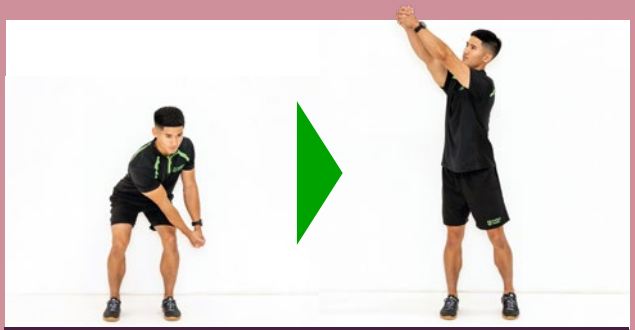
Squat

Star jump

Side to side

Mobility

Shoulder rotation



Wood chop

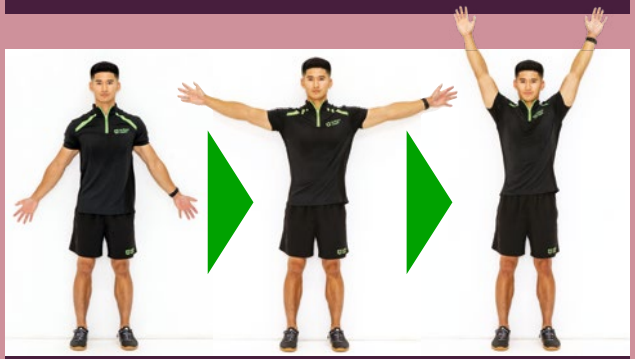
Leg extension hold

Lateral raise

Calf raise (chair)

Torso rotation

Knee lift hug (chair)



Wall angel

Leg swing

Strength

Single leg balance

Side lunge

Lateral raise rotate

Leg extension and hold

Wall push off

3 point wall slide

Glute kick back

3 point toe touch

WEEK 1

'Build your own' workout card

Select your weekly cardio, mobility and strength exercises (pages 55 – 57) and list them below. Use this as a guide when exercising.

EXERCISE	DESCRIPTION	DURATION (seconds) (length of exercise)	RECOVERY (seconds) (time between sets)	NO. OF REPS (repeats of the exercise)	NO. OF SETS (cycles of reps)
eg. Single leg balance	Standing still on one leg	10	60	5	2

Activity diary

Use this diary to record the time and day of your weekly activities. Discuss your progress with your Rehab Specialist on your 1:1 call.

Activities to record:

- 1:1 call with your Rehab Specialist
- Live stream exercise class
- On-demand workout
- 'Build your own' workout
- Record my scale of effort scores on page 53
- Emotional wellbeing activity and webinar

MONDAY

eg. 10am – Took part in my online exercise class and recorded my effort score

TUESDAY

eg. 3pm – Watched webinar on the Rehab hub

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

eg. 11am – Completed on-demand workout – recorded my effort score

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

eg. 10.30am – Did my 'Build your own' workout and recorded my effort score after

SUNDAY

WEEK 2

‘Build your own’ workout card

Select your weekly cardio, mobility and strength exercises (pages 55 – 57) and list them below. Use this as a guide when exercising.

EXERCISE	DESCRIPTION	DURATION (seconds) (length of exercise)	RECOVERY (seconds) (time between sets)	NO. OF REPS (repeats of the exercise)	NO. OF SETS (cycles of reps)

Activity diary

Use this diary to record the time and day of your weekly activities. Discuss your progress with your Rehab Specialist on your 1:1 call.

Activities to record:

- 1:1 call with your Rehab Specialist
- Live stream exercise class
- On-demand workout
- 'Build your own' workout
- Record my scale of effort scores on page 53
- Emotional wellbeing activity and webinar

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

WEEK 3

‘Build your own’ workout card

Select your weekly cardio, mobility and strength exercises (pages 55 – 57) and list them below. Use this as a guide when exercising.

EXERCISE	DESCRIPTION	DURATION (seconds) (length of exercise)	RECOVERY (seconds) (time between sets)	NO. OF REPS (repeats of the exercise)	NO. OF SETS (cycles of reps)

Activity diary

Use this diary to record the time and day of your weekly activities. Discuss your progress with your Rehab Specialist on your 1:1 call.

Activities to record:

- 1:1 call with your Rehab Specialist
- Live stream exercise class
- On-demand workout
- 'Build your own' workout
- Record my scale of effort scores on page 53
- Emotional wellbeing activity and webinar

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

WEEK 4

‘Build your own’ workout card

Select your weekly cardio, mobility and strength exercises (pages 55 – 57) and list them below. Use this as a guide when exercising.

EXERCISE	DESCRIPTION	DURATION (seconds) (length of exercise)	RECOVERY (seconds) (time between sets)	NO. OF REPS (repeats of the exercise)	NO. OF SETS (cycles of reps)

Activity diary

Use this diary to record the time and day of your weekly activities. Discuss your progress with your Rehab Specialist on your 1:1 call.

Activities to record:

- 1:1 call with your Rehab Specialist
- Live stream exercise class
- On-demand workout
- 'Build your own' workout
- Record my scale of effort scores on page 53
- Emotional wellbeing activity and webinar

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

WEEK 5

‘Build your own’ workout card

Select your weekly cardio, mobility and strength exercises (pages 55 – 57) and list them below. Use this as a guide when exercising.

EXERCISE	DESCRIPTION	DURATION (seconds) (length of exercise)	RECOVERY (seconds) (time between sets)	NO. OF REPS (repeats of the exercise)	NO. OF SETS (cycles of reps)

Activity diary

Use this diary to record the time and day of your weekly activities. Discuss your progress with your Rehab Specialist on your 1:1 call.

Activities to record:

- 1:1 call with your Rehab Specialist
- Live stream exercise class
- On-demand workout
- 'Build your own' workout
- Record my scale of effort scores on page 53
- Emotional wellbeing activity and webinar

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

WEEK 6

‘Build your own’ workout card

Select your weekly cardio, mobility and strength exercises (pages 55 – 57) and list them below. Use this as a guide when exercising.

EXERCISE	DESCRIPTION	DURATION (seconds) (length of exercise)	RECOVERY (seconds) (time between sets)	NO. OF REPS (repeats of the exercise)	NO. OF SETS (cycles of reps)

Activity diary

Use this diary to record the time and day of your weekly activities. Discuss your progress with your Rehab Specialist on your 1:1 call.

Activities to record:

- 1:1 call with your Rehab Specialist
- Live stream exercise class
- On-demand workout
- 'Build your own' workout
- Record my scale of effort scores on page 53
- Emotional wellbeing activity and webinar

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

WEEK 7

‘Build your own’ workout card

Select your weekly cardio, mobility and strength exercises (pages 55 – 57) and list them below. Use this as a guide when exercising.

EXERCISE	DESCRIPTION	DURATION (seconds) (length of exercise)	RECOVERY (seconds) (time between sets)	NO. OF REPS (repeats of the exercise)	NO. OF SETS (cycles of reps)

Activity diary

Use this diary to record the time and day of your weekly activities. Discuss your progress with your Rehab Specialist on your 1:1 call.

Activities to record:

- 1:1 call with your Rehab Specialist
- Live stream exercise class
- On-demand workout
- 'Build your own' workout
- Record my scale of effort scores on page 53
- Emotional wellbeing activity and webinar

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

WEEK 8

‘Build your own’ workout card

Select your weekly cardio, mobility and strength exercises (pages 55 – 57) and list them below. Use this as a guide when exercising.

EXERCISE	DESCRIPTION	DURATION (seconds) (length of exercise)	RECOVERY (seconds) (time between sets)	NO. OF REPS (repeats of the exercise)	NO. OF SETS (cycles of reps)

Activity diary

Use this diary to record the time and day of your weekly activities. Discuss your progress with your Rehab Specialist on your 1:1 call.

Activities to record:

- 1:1 call with your Rehab Specialist
- Live stream exercise class
- On-demand workout
- 'Build your own' workout
- Record my scale of effort scores on page 53
- Emotional wellbeing activity and webinar

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

WEEK 9

‘Build your own’ workout card

Select your weekly cardio, mobility and strength exercises (pages 55 – 57) and list them below. Use this as a guide when exercising.

EXERCISE	DESCRIPTION	DURATION (seconds) (length of exercise)	RECOVERY (seconds) (time between sets)	NO. OF REPS (repeats of the exercise)	NO. OF SETS (cycles of reps)

Activity diary

Use this diary to record the time and day of your weekly activities. Discuss your progress with your Rehab Specialist on your 1:1 call.

Activities to record:

- 1:1 call with your Rehab Specialist
- Live stream exercise class
- On-demand workout
- 'Build your own' workout
- Record my scale of effort scores on page 53
- Emotional wellbeing activity and webinar

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

WEEK 10

'Build your own' workout card

Select your weekly cardio, mobility and strength exercises (pages 55 – 57) and list them below. Use this as a guide when exercising.

EXERCISE	DESCRIPTION	DURATION (seconds) (length of exercise)	RECOVERY (seconds) (time between sets)	NO. OF REPS (repeats of the exercise)	NO. OF SETS (cycles of reps)

Activity diary

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- Live stream exercise class
- On-demand workout
- 'Build your own' workout
- Record my scale of effort scores on page 53
- Emotional wellbeing activity and webinar

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

WEEK 11

'Build your own' workout card

Select your weekly cardio, mobility and strength exercises (pages 55 – 57) and list them below. Use this as a guide when exercising.

EXERCISE	DESCRIPTION	DURATION (seconds) (length of exercise)	RECOVERY (seconds) (time between sets)	NO. OF REPS (repeats of the exercise)	NO. OF SETS (cycles of reps)

Activity diary

Use this diary to record the time and day of your weekly activities. Discuss your progress with your Rehab Specialist on your 1:1 call.

Activities to record:

- 1:1 call with your Rehab Specialist
- Live stream exercise class
- On-demand workout
- 'Build your own' workout
- Record my scale of effort scores on page 53
- Emotional wellbeing activity and webinar

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

WEEK 12

'Build your own' workout card

Select your weekly cardio, mobility and strength exercises (pages 55 – 57) and list them below. Use this as a guide when exercising.

EXERCISE	DESCRIPTION	DURATION (seconds) (length of exercise)	RECOVERY (seconds) (time between sets)	NO. OF REPS (repeats of the exercise)	NO. OF SETS (cycles of reps)

Activity diary

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- Record my scale of effort scores on page 53
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MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

Well done, you did it!

Now you have successfully completed your programme with us, it is time to look at supporting your future wellbeing and how to keep on track.

Creating your own action plan can help you reinforce the things you do to maintain your wellbeing. This can include recognising and identifying changes in your thinking, behaviours, mood or physical symptoms to maintain your progress and prevent a recurrence of any previous issues.

This action plan will help you to identify the key activities, strategies and resources that have been helpful in your rehabilitation programme. Write these down in the chart opposite and refer to them to help maintain your physical fitness and emotional resilience.

You have already demonstrated throughout the programme that you have achieved positive changes. This action plan can help you maintain the progress you have made and help you to keep up the good work!

The activities you do and your everyday thoughts can all contribute to your overall health and wellbeing. As your recovery continues, think about what you would like to achieve and use the techniques you learnt on this programme to help you do this, such as:

- Enjoying a new experience or taking up a new hobby
- Kicking a ball around with friends or family
- Returning to work or a new career path
- Exercising regularly
- Maintaining a positive outlook

Remember to reward yourself for your accomplishments such as using a new coping strategy, sticking to an exercise plan, or challenging negative behaviours or thinking patterns. The reward could be something simple and does not have to be expensive, but make sure it is something you enjoy. Rewarding yourself for achievements will help you to promote and maintain positive behaviour in the future.

"As your recovery continues, think about what you would like to achieve and use the techniques you learnt on this programme to help you do this."

My health action plan

Identify the key exercises, activities and techniques that have been most useful in your recovery. How did these help and how did you feel both physically and emotionally when you achieved something positive during your recovery?

EXERCISE / SKILL / TECHNIQUE	HOW THIS HELPED IN MY RECOVERY
eg. Build your own' workouts	Choosing my exercises kept me motivated and helped me to do more and feel less tired

To find out more about how Nuffield Health can support your health and wellbeing journey visit:

www.nuffieldhealth.com