

MOTION & STRENGTH

Pain Therapy | Sports Rehabilitation | Exercise-Based Rehab

PAIN FLARE-UP GUIDE

What to do when pain suddenly gets worse

A short practical guide to help you calm symptoms, avoid overreacting, and decide your next step.

Skelmersdale & West Lancashire

motionandstrength.co.uk



1. First: check whether this is safe to self-manage

A flare-up can feel dramatic, but it does not automatically mean you have damaged something. Before trying to calm it down, check whether anything feels new, unusual or medically concerning.

RED: Get urgent advice now

Seek urgent medical advice if you have new bladder or bowel changes, numbness around the saddle area, chest pain, major trauma, fever or feeling very unwell, new/worsening weakness or numbness, or symptoms that feel unusual and worrying for you.

AMBER: Get help sooner

Pain is rapidly worsening, not behaving like your normal symptoms, disturbing sleep severely, or stopping basic daily tasks.

GREEN: Start with the plan

No urgent signs, symptoms change with position or movement, and you can find at least one way to make it more tolerable.

Do not wait for perfect

You do not need to be pain-free before moving. The target is tolerable, repeatable and settling afterwards.

Quick aim for today

Do not try to fix everything in one go. Your first target is to reduce threat: make symptoms feel more manageable, find a small amount of movement you can tolerate, and avoid the boom-bust pattern of doing too much then crashing.

What eases it?

Position, short walk, gentle movement, heat, cold, breathing, changing posture, or reducing load.

What flares it?

Range, speed, weight, time, repeated bending, sitting, stairs, lifting, driving, training or stress.

Choose one change

Reduce one variable first: less range, less load, fewer reps, shorter time, slower speed or more breaks.

Check tomorrow

If it is the same or better, continue. If clearly worse next day, reduce the dose further.

Keep the next step boring

The best early step is usually small, repeatable and predictable - not a big test.

Ask for help if unsure

If symptoms are unusual, worsening or affecting normal life, getting assessed is reasonable.

This guide is general information. If you are unsure, your symptoms are unusual for you, or you feel unsafe, seek medical advice.

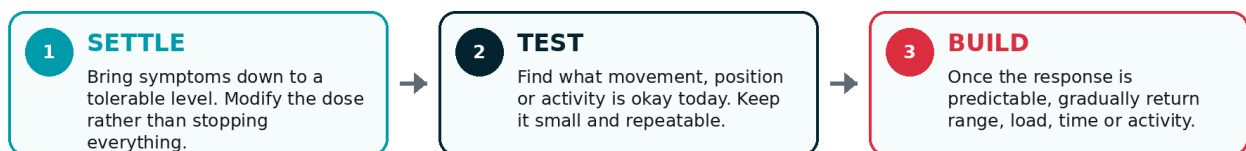
2. How to bring the pain down

The goal is not to force a full return immediately. The goal is to make symptoms feel calmer and more predictable, then gradually rebuild. Think 'reduce the dose', not 'stop life'.

Reduce the dose Temporarily reduce range, load, reps, speed or time. Example: shorter walk, lighter lift, smaller bend, easier exercise, more breaks.	Use gentle movement Choose a movement that feels tolerable and repeat it little and often. Stop short of provoking a clear spike that lingers.
Heat or cold Heat may help stiffness or guarding. Cold may help if the area feels hot, swollen or acutely irritated. Wrap packs and use short periods.	Medication Over-the-counter pain relief may help some people keep moving. Follow the packet and ask a pharmacist/GP if you take other medication or have health conditions.
Calm the system Slow breathing, a comfortable position, a short walk, or reducing worry-provoking movements can all help settle sensitivity.	Avoid the trap Do not use pain relief or a good hour as permission to test everything at once. Keep the next step boring and repeatable.

3. Use a simple three-stage response

The three stages of a sensible flare-up response



Rule of thumb: progress when the next-day response is the same or better. Reduce the dose if it is clearly worse.

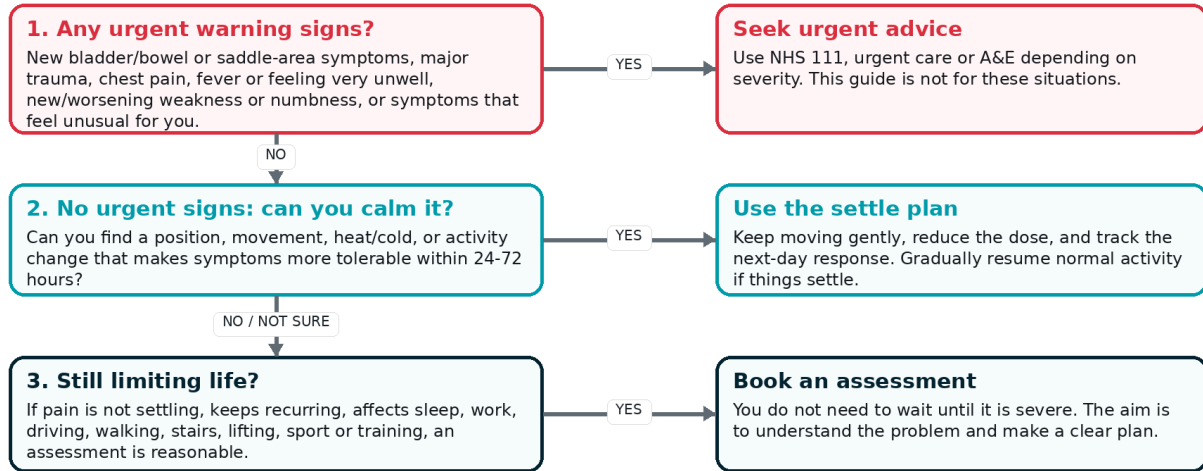
Useful rule: a movement can be acceptable even if it is not pain-free. The key question is whether it stays tolerable and settles back to baseline within a reasonable time.

4. Do I need to see someone?

Use this flowchart after you have checked for urgent warning signs and tried a sensible settle plan.

Do I need to see someone?

Use this as a simple decision guide. It does not replace medical advice.



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Book or request help with a flare-up

Add your booking QR code or booking link here. Motion & Strength provides pain therapy, sports rehabilitation and exercise-based rehab in Skelmersdale and West Lancashire.

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