

MYLIFE TOOL

EMBRACING
MY BODY

TOOLBOX
BOOK TWO



ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

It can take some time, but you can begin to recognise when you cannot physically or mentally carry on with a task. Or you may need to learn what triggers your symptoms (e.g. certain foods or movements).

Paying attention to what your body is telling you can be challenging and tempting to ignore, but it can help you learn how to live better with your condition(s).

This booklet will encourage you to think about...

- The coping and pacing strategies you already use
- Taking extra time to complete an activity and how to break it down into smaller parts

In many conditions time and energy levels are affected. You can use different planning and pacing techniques to manage and conserve your energy levels, but you might not know what techniques you can use or you may not recognise ones that you have already developed .

“Things that you might have planned to do or wanted to do or would like to do, have to get parked”

SPENDING YOUR ENERGY WISELY

This tool can help you become more aware of how different activities affect your energy levels. It may take some time for you to work out what each activity “costs” you but once you do, you can use this tool to plan your days.

Imagine you have ten energy coins to spend each day on activities to keep the scales balanced.

What activities can you do today to keep the scales balanced?

Activity	No. of Coins
e.g. getting dressed	1 coin

Did you manage to keep the scales balanced?

What does your body feel like when you have spent all of your coins?	What did you do when you had spent all of your coins?
If you kept going on borrowed coins, where did you overspend and why?	What could you do differently next time?

MY BODY AND MIND

Paying attention to your symptoms can be challenging, because it can make the symptoms feel stronger and maybe even make you worry more about them.

However, if we choose to ignore our symptoms, then we don't learn what makes them better or worse. This tool encourages you to be curious and mindful about your thoughts or activities (or movements).

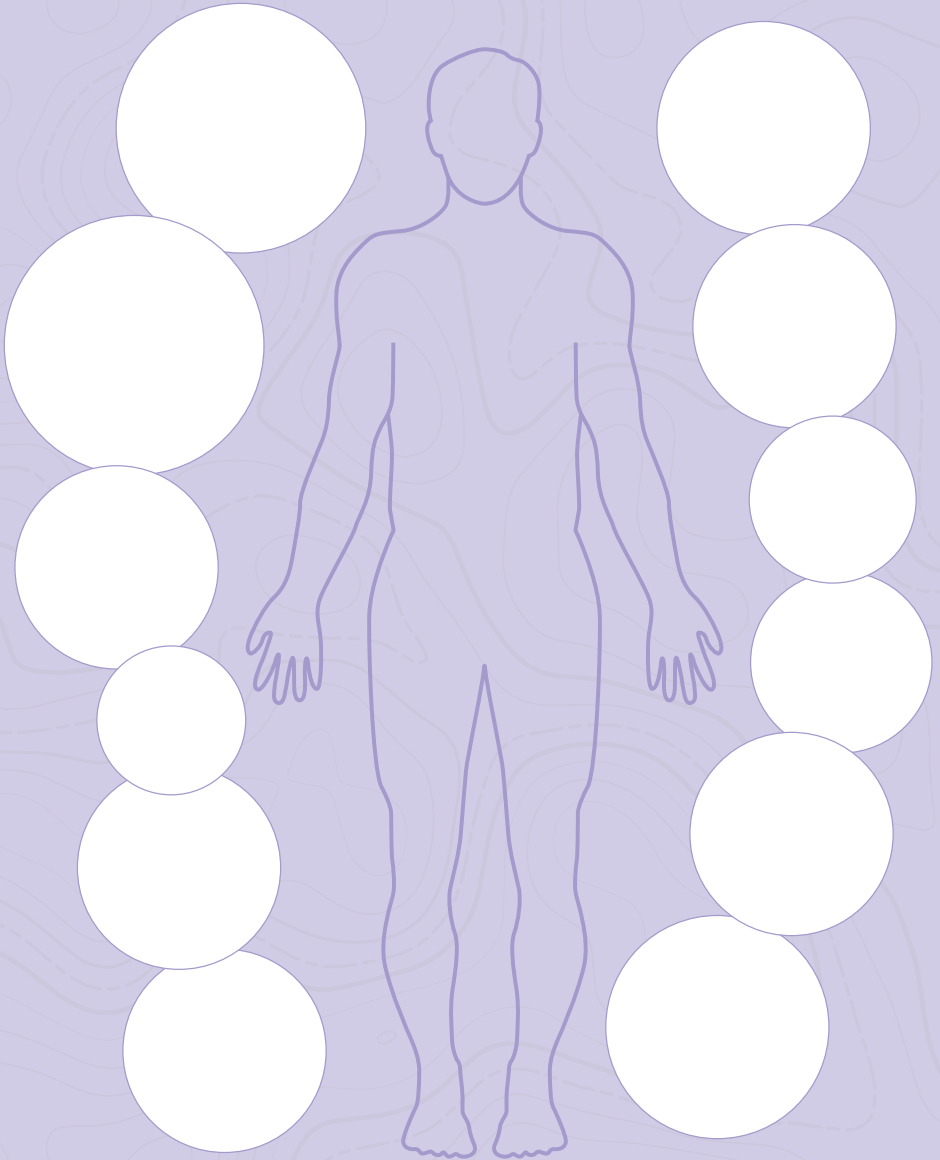
Once you know that, you can think of what to change to make yourself feel better.

Write your symptoms in the head below and the circles opposite and take time to reflect on what helps and what doesn't help with each one.

MY MIND



MY BODY



LOOKING AFTER MY BODY

This tool can help you get better at thinking about ways to change the demands on your body in a helpful direction. To improve your condition you may need to do certain things differently, e.g. do less of some things (e.g. strenuous activity) and more of others (e.g. helpful exercise).

The first part of this tool looks at reducing demands on the body. We often take our body for granted and expect it to be able to do what we want. Illness teaches us the importance of balancing activity and rest, but it can be a hard lesson to learn.

Reducing demands on my body	
What activities can I stop or delegate?	E.g. are there things you do out of habit that are not essential?
What activities can I reduce/make easier?	E.g. use gadgets to reduce bending down
What activities can I break down into sections?	E.g. hoovering one room per day instead of the whole house
When can build rest into my day?	E.g. regular time-outs mid-afternoon
How can I mix activities better?	E.g. change regularly between physical and mental activity
What activities can I stop or delegate?	E.g. are there things you do out of habit that are not essential?
How can I keep enjoyable activities?	E.g. create space for relaxed time with loved ones
How can I take care of my body's needs?	E.g. hot baths or stretching exercises

LOOKING AFTER MY BODY

Just as it is important to learn to rest and keep activities within what your body can manage, it is just as important to build up the body's strength and resources. Depending on your condition(s) this is likely to look very differently from person to person.

General advice on healthy living (e.g. good sleep, diet and exercise) applies to all, however, it may need to be adapted to suit your particular circumstances. The questions in the second part of this tool will help you think about what you need to do and how.

Improving my body's health and resilience	
What improvements to my diet do I want to make?	E.g. reduce food that makes you feel bad or eat more healthily
What can I do to strengthen my body?	E.g. gradually build capacity to walk further
What can I do to improve my sleep?	E.g. regular/earlier bed time routine
What activities make me feel better?	E.g. having a laugh with friends
What activities do I need to do differently?	E.g. doing chores together instead of alone
What makes me feel better physically?	
What makes me feel better emotionally?	

MYLIFE TOOL

Developed by



NEURO KEY

An Alliance supporting people
with neurological conditions



Meaning & Purpose
Living with
Long-Term Conditions



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