Activity Basics

Week 3 of 3

Primary Care Network
CALGARY FOOTHILLS

Agenda for Week 3

- Review of Week 2 Home Practice
- Increasing Activity Tolerance
- Activity Analysis
- Activity Pacing
- Take-Home Messages

Group Discussion: Home Practice

- Tolerance Training
  - How did working at baseline tolerance go?
  - What challenges did you encounter? Motivating factors?
- Self-Monitoring
  - What did you notice about your posture and body mechanics this week?
  - Did you make any changes to your body mechanics or ergonomics?
- Stretching and Strengthening Exercises

Self-Management Plan

Primary Care Network
CALGARY FOOTHILLS

Increasing Tolerance

Increasing Activity Tolerance

- **Goal: To increase function over time**

- Slow and steady approach to retrain nervous system

- We recommend a 3-step approach:

  1. Find your current tolerance level
  2. Calculate new baseline or "starting point" to build from
  3. Follow a schedule to slowly increase activity level over time

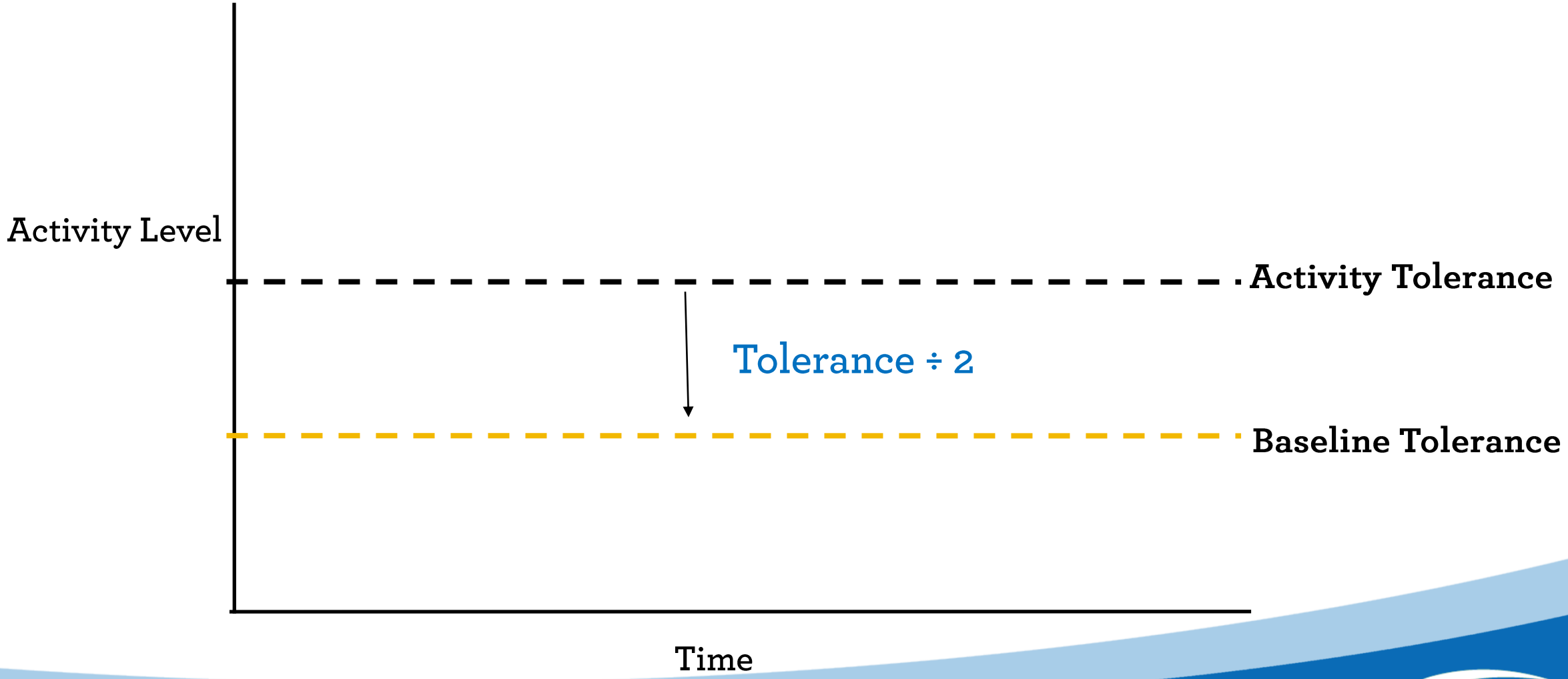
Step 3: Increasing Activity Tolerance

- Now that you are comfortable at your baseline tolerance, you can begin increasing your tolerance

- Progression = Add 10% of Baseline Tolerance, at least every 3 times or as able

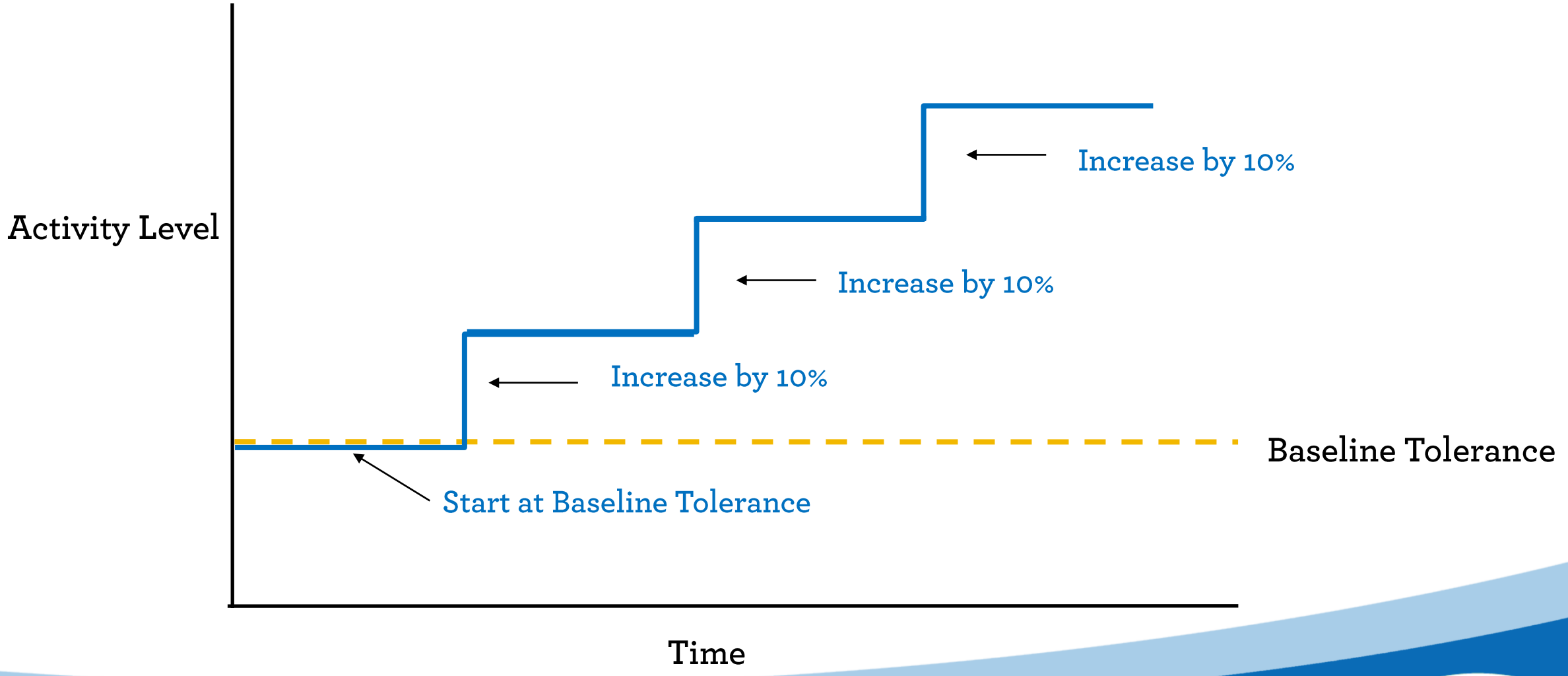
- This slow and steady approach of small increases is essential for retraining our nervous system

Activity Tolerance Training



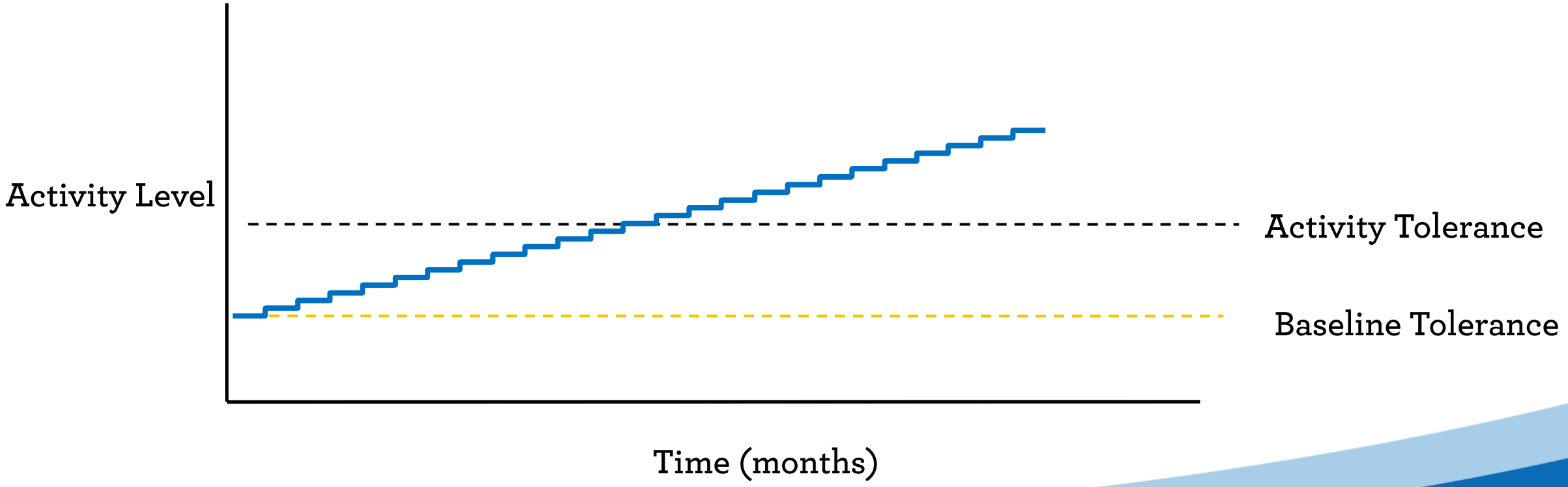
Primary Care Network
CALGARY FOOTHILLS

Step 3: Follow a schedule to slowly increase tolerance



Primary Care Network
CALGARY FOOTHILLS

The Bigger Picture



Example: Walking Tolerance

- Tolerance ≠ Maximum
  - Tolerance = noticeable increase in pain
  - Maximum = you have to stop
- Tolerance ÷ 2 = Baseline
- Progress by ~10% every 3 times OR each week *as able*
- Tolerance level is unique to specific activities and exercises

Step1: Activity Tolerance

"After 20 minutes I have to stop"
"When I start walking, my knee pain is 6/10. After 10 minutes, my knee pain is 7/10"
Activity tolerance = 10 minutes

Step 2: Baseline

10 minutes ÷ 2 = 5 min

Step 3: Progression

10% of 5 min = 30 seconds

- *Week 1: 5 min*
- *Week 2 (increase by 10%): 5 min 30 sec*
- *Week 3 (increase by another 10%): 6 min*

Primary Care Network
CALGARY FOOTHILLS

Activity Analysis

Primary Care Network
CALGARY FOOTHILLS

Activity Analysis

- A tool to increase self-awareness and explore activity modifications

- Involves analyzing activity demands:
  - Physical demands
  - Thinking demands
  - Emotional demands
  - Environmental demands (including ergonomic and social demands)

Activity Analysis continued

- After reviewing the demands and your approach to the activity, identify specific aspects that may be contributing to symptoms
- Problem solve to modify the activity demands
- Self-monitor impact of modifications on symptoms and overall functioning

Primary Care Network
CALGARY FOOTHILLS

Your Health, Your Team, Your Community

Activity Analysis Tool

Every activity can be broken down into component parts. Activity components dictate how demanding or challenging the activity is to perform. By using the activity analysis tool, we can break down an activity into its 'activity demands': Time, Physical, Ergonomic, Social, Thinking, and Emotional. The tool helps identify specific challenges and brainstorm activity modifications to overcome these challenges. By considering alternative ways to perform an activity, we can reduce the activity demands and promote functioning!

Describe the activity:

What steps are involved to complete the activity? List the steps, in order, from start to finish:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

What are the barriers/challenges to completing the steps?

Group Activity

ACTIVITY ANALYSIS HANDOUT

Primary Care Network
CALGARY FOOTHILLS

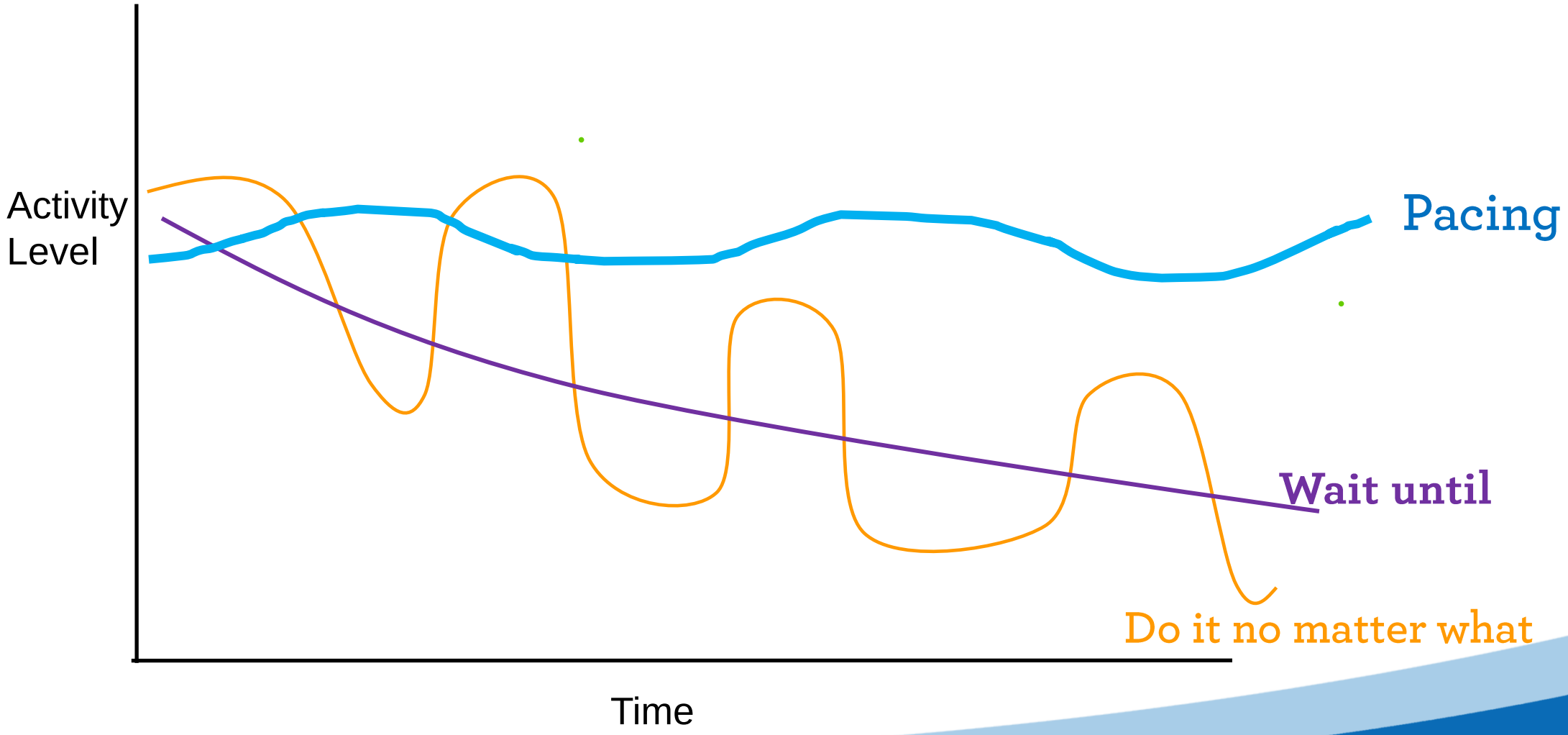
Tips & Tricks

- Easy activity modifications:
  - Stand with one foot elevated (stool, book, low cupboard)
  - Perching stool
  - Wheeled cart/trolley
  - Use drawstring laundry bag
  - Walk around while on the phone, use headphones
  - Give yourself permission to start a task and finish it later
  - Take micro breaks
  - Explore assistive devices (e.g., long-handled aids)

Activity Pacing

Primary Care Network
CALGARY FOOTHILLS

Comparing Approaches



The Tortoise & The Hare

The Pacing Approach

"**Active self-management strategy** whereby individuals learn to **balance time spent on activity and rest** for the purpose of achieving **increased function** and participation in meaningful activities" (Jamieson-Lega, Berry & Brown, 2013, p.207)

Rest and Recovery

What is the purpose/intention?

Reactive, unstructured

OR

Active, purposeful, calming of nervous system

How to Pace: The 4 P's

Positioning

Prioritizing

Planning

Perspective

Positioning

(How are you going to do activities?)

- Neutral posture, good body mechanics, optimal ergonomics, regular movement breaks
- Alternate activities and 'work stations' to engage different body parts
- Consider assistive devices to minimize excess strain
  (e.g., long handled devices, foot stool, grab bars, walking poles)

Prioritizing

(What activities do you need to do?)

- Identify:
  - Things you have to do, are expected to do, and want to do
  - Arrange in order of importance
  - Decide what may be shared or delegated
  - Give yourself permission to prioritize self-care and rest/recovery

Planning

(When are you doing to do the activities?)

- Choose a manageable period of time to plan ahead for
- Create a balanced schedule
    - Ideally, no day is more demanding than the next
    - Alternate between more and less demanding activities
    - Schedule in time for rest and self-care
    - Allow for flexibility
- How to Plan – write it down!
    - Use a tool: Calendar, Day-Timer, Organizer, Apps

Perspective

(Why are you Pacing?)

- Pacing helps to maintain activity levels and productivity
- Working within your tolerance means reduced likelihood for a flare-up
- Pacing is a skill that requires time and patience
- Pacing can be hard work and becomes more automatic with time
- Having unhelpful thoughts and feelings are normal

Helpful Thoughts for Pacing

- "If I pace myself, I'll have energy to enjoy my family later."
- "I can start it now, and finish it this afternoon."
- "When others think of me they think about my personal qualities, not about how much I get done in a day."
- "I have prioritized my activities, so by sticking to my plan I'll be getting the most important things done."

Group Discussion:

How might implementing Pacing
(Positioning, Prioritizing, Planning, Perspective)
be challenging?

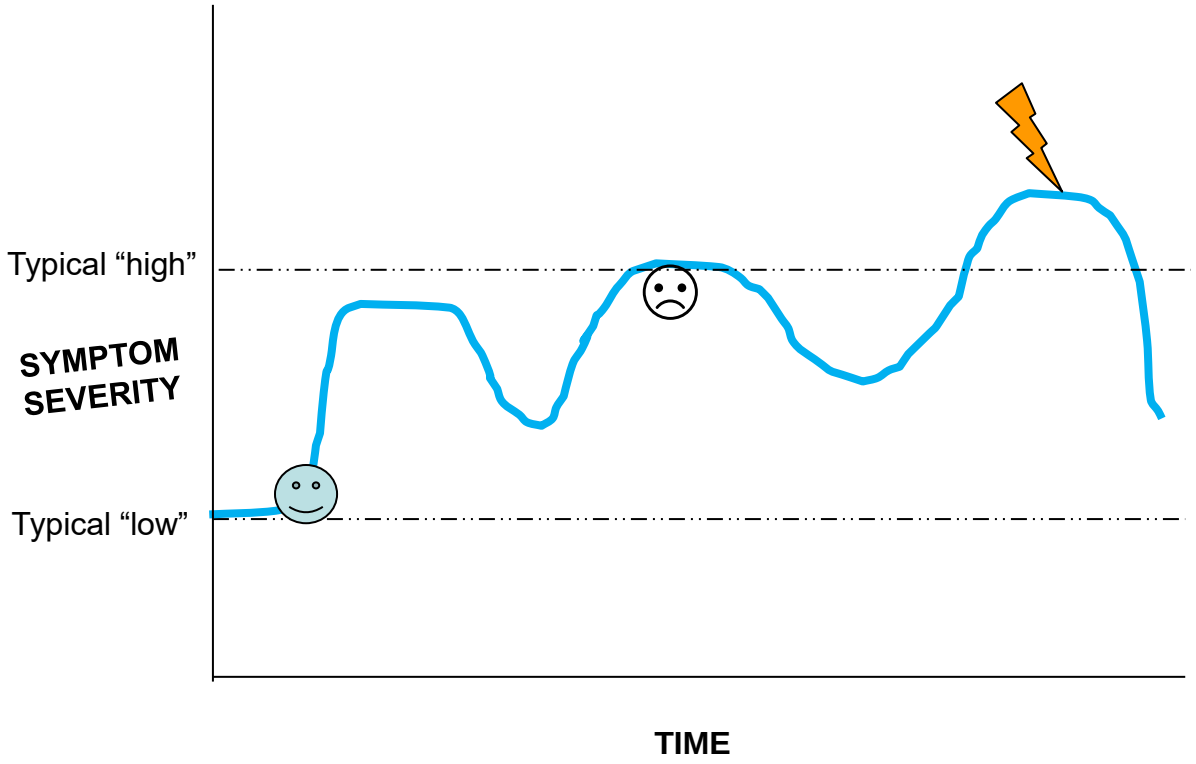
How might Pacing/4Ps be helpful
to improve daily functioning?

If I Feel Good, Can I Do More?

- Pacing allows the body to adjust to a more consistent activity level, with fewer peaks and valleys in pain and energy
- On a good day, do not add a challenging activity… Enjoy having less pain and more energy
- If you must, only add low demand and/or enjoyable tasks
- Sticking to your pacing plan increases the likelihood for another good day tomorrow

What Happens on a Bad Day?

- Still within the typical symptom range *not a flare
- Do not abandon your plan/schedule
- Modify, take frequent breaks, ask for help, consider eliminating the most demanding task(s)
- Take breaks when you reach your activity tolerance



Primary Care Network
CALGARY FOOTHILLS

What Happens during a Flare-Up?

- A flare up means you have exceeded your typical range of symptoms
- Individualized flare-up plan + specific flare-up strategies
  *may be different from daily self-management strategies
- Contact your health care provider for individualized support

Primary Care Network
CALGARY FOOTHILLS

Group Discussion: What stands out for you?

- Review of Chronic Pain
- Rest and Activity
- Self-monitoring
- Increasing Tolerances
- Posture
- Body mechanics
- Ergonomics
- Activity Analysis
- Exercises: Stretching and Strengthening
- Activity Pacing

Self-Management Plan

Primary Care Network
CALGARY FOOTHILLS

Next Steps

Primary Care Network
CALGARY FOOTHILLS