



Rainbow Pacing Graphs

Pacing activity to promote recovery after brain injury

Rainbow Pacing Graphs – Putting the Principles of Pacing into Action

This is a tool to help you get your symptoms under better control to help with your recovery. There are 3 worksheets for you to complete. The Rainbow Symptom List, the Rainbow Activity List and the Rainbow Graph. Start by completing the Rainbow Symptom List and the Rainbow Activity List. You will need to revisit these lists periodically to add tasks or modify what category they belong in depending on how you are changing and how accurate you were the first time you completed them.

Building the Rainbow Symptom List

- Notice if there is a predictable progression of your symptoms
- Are there early warning signs? A symptom that consistently appears first?
- When are you getting to a point where it will take time and rest to recover to baseline?
- When are you past the point of no return? What are your symptoms and what is their intensity?
- When do you feel good? When are tasks easier?
- Try to consider what zone your symptoms correspond to so you can graph them accurately throughout the day. Use the Rainbow Zones definitions in the chart below to help you.
- Now fill out the Rainbow Symptom List Worksheet by listing how your symptoms and intensities (eg 5/10 headache) would be in each zone. This may take time and trial and error to be accurate

Building the Rainbow Activity List

- Reflect on the things you need and want to do and consider your ability to complete them and how they make you feel
- Place the activity in the colour that matches what the task is for you. You can see the sample list provided but your list might look different depending on your level of function.
- Plan out your day using the colours – minimize or eliminate the amount of red & oranges tasks you need to do, increase the amount of blue and green tasks you do.
- When putting tasks into the colour categories, think about time – eg. reading for 30 min might be an orange task but for 10 min a green task.

- As you start to notice how your body reacts to different activities you might need to revisit what category you have placed a task and move it up or down the scale.

How to use the Rainbow Tracking Graph

Use the Rainbow Activity List to help you schedule your day on the Rainbow Graph. Use the principles of pacing. The Rainbow Graph you will use one per day so you will need to print multiple copies.

- Each morning – consider if yesterday was light/moderate/heavy and what your plans are for tomorrow.
- Try to plan out a day that you know you can handle
- Write down your activities & then rate what colour they are in the rating column
- Every 30-60 min place a dot on the symptom tracker for the zone of your symptoms
- At the end of the day or the next morning connect the dots on your symptom tracker.
- Then try to reflect on what your graph shows to see if you notice patterns between activity and symptoms
- Start to build your daily schedule in ways that keep you in the target activity zone

Time	Activity	Rating	Symptom Tracker				Date:
7:00				Exertion:			
7:30	Wake up/Breakfast	Green		Yesterday	Light	Med	Heavy
8:00	Shower/Dressed/Blow dry hair	Yellow		Tomorrow	Light	Med	Heavy
8:30	Walk kids to school/home	Yellow		Sleep			
9:00	Check email/vision & balance exs	Orange		Good	Med	Poor	__7_ Hrs
9:30	Mediation/tea/stretching	Blue		Reflections			
	Clean kitchen/make	Yellow		<p>More symptomatic in the morning after dropping kids off than I expected, My afternoon nap really helps me bring my symptoms from the morning activities down, I don't have any blue tasks from when I pick up the kids until they go to bed. I need to find a way to build in some restorative blue tasks otherwise I have a hard time falling asleep.</p>			
10:00	beds/laundry	Yellow					
10:30	Reading/TV/make grocery list	Orange					
11:00	Sit outside/breathing/cuddle dog	Purple					
11:30	Lunch & dinner prep	Yellow					
12:00	Eat lunch	Blue					
12:30	clean up kitchen	Green					
13:00	Nap	Purple					
13:30	Nap	Purple					
14:00	Facetime Mom	Yellow					
14:30	Restorative Yoga/Balance exercises	Yellow					
15:00	Listen to audiobook	Blue					
15:30	Pick up kids from school	Yellow					
16:00	Dinner prep	Orange					
16:30	Homework help	Orange					
17:00	finish dinner & eat	Orange					
17:30	clean up kitchen	Orange					
18:00	Walk to playground	Yellow					
18:30	Sit & watch kids on playground	Yellow					
19:00	Play board game	Yellow					
19:30	Bedtime routine/Kids in bed	Orange					
20:00	Finish bedtime/Meditation	Green					
20:30	Listen to audiobook	Blue					
21:00	Make lunches/Get ready for bed	Yellow					
21:30	Sleep meditation/go to sleep	Purple					
22:00	Trouble falling asleep - headache	Purple					
22:30	Finally fell asleep	Purple					

Rainbow Symptom List

Flare (*point of no return*)

Very symptomatic, difficult to continue any tasks

Stress (*pushing*)

Symptoms more noticeable and start to interfere with performance, can still continue but there is a cost

Stretch (*growth*)

Some symptoms starting but can still perform tasks and recover in a reasonable time period

Rebuild (*healing*)

Feeling good, things are easy to do without too much effort, symptoms are minimal or brief and easy to settle

Recharge (*back to baseline*)

Recovering from doing too much, may have symptoms, fatigued, tasks that are normally easy are harder than usual

Shut Down (*deep rest*)

Exhausted, unable to do much, retreating from people and activities

Rainbow Activity List - Sample

Flare

- groceries, heavy household chores, more intensive physical tasks (exercise, lifting, bending)
- longer busier social events, computer or paper work, reading too long, travel/driving, louder environments, medical appointments, intense emotional experiences

Stress

- walk, stairs, standing yoga, moderate indoor/outdoor chores, showering, 2 errands
- paying bills, meal planning, watching TV, smaller social events,

Stretch

- shorter walk, meal prep, light to moderate household chores, gentle yoga or tai chi, 1 short errand
- phone conversation, checking emails, hosting a short social visit, board game, cognitive app, scheduling your day/week

Rebuild

- walking around house, seated yoga or tai chi, light chores (seated meal prep, folding laundry, tidying), gentle strength exercises
- Listening to an audiobook or podcast, leisure task, short cognitive task (meal plan, scheduling)

Recharge

- breathing, mindfulness, gentle stretching, listening to music, book, podcast
- cuddling a pet, sitting outside, easy leisure task, colouring, snack/drink, cold therapy

Shut Down

- sleeping, nap, lying horizontal, breathing, sitting quietly, drink/snack

Your Rainbow Symptom List

Flare <i>(point of no return)</i>	
Stress <i>(pushing)</i>	
Stretch <i>(growth)</i>	
Rebuild <i>(healing)</i>	
Recharge <i>(back to baseline)</i>	
Shutdown <i>(deep rest)</i>	

Your Rainbow Activity List

Red (Flare)	
Orange (Stress)	
Yellow (Stretch)	
Green (Rebuild)	
Blue (Recharge)	
Purple (Shutdown)	

Time	Activity	Rating	Symptom Tracker					Date:				
7:00			<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; padding: 5px;"> <div style="background-color: #6a3d9a; color: white; padding: 5px; writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Shut Down (Deep Rest)</div> <div style="background-color: #1f9e9e; color: white; padding: 5px; writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Recharge (Back to baseline)</div> <div style="background-color: #4db6ac; color: white; padding: 5px; writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Rebuild (Healing)</div> <div style="background-color: #8bc34a; color: white; padding: 5px; writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Stretch (Growth)</div> <div style="background-color: #ffcdd2; color: white; padding: 5px; writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Stress (Pushing)</div> <div style="background-color: #e57373; color: white; padding: 5px; writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Flare (past the point of no return)</div> </div>	Exertion:								
7:30				Yesterday	Light	Med	Heavy					
8:00				Tomorrow	Light	Med	Heavy					
8:30												
9:00				Sleep								
9:30				Good	Med	Poor	____ Hrs					
10:00												
10:30				Reflections								
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