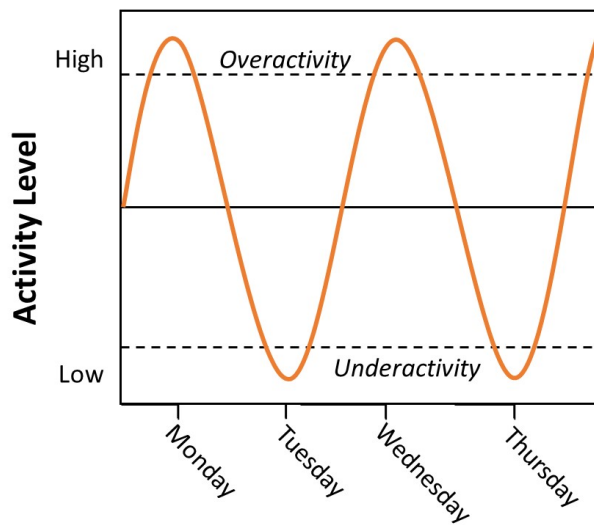


Pacing Yourself

Some of the stress you experience may result in pain or fatigue. When we are fatigued, in pain, or experiencing other symptoms, we may have good days and bad days. On the good days, we may want to get everything accomplished (clean the whole house, play with your kids all day), because we feel good! While this is reasonable, the risk is that we do too much, and the next day (or days) we are completely wiped out and exhausted because we overdid it. If we were to graph our activity levels, it would look like this:



Another consequence is that the periods of low activity also bring along low mood, sadness, depression, or irritability. To avoid periods of inactivity and low mood, set a realistic goal and pace yourself, especially on your good days. Set a time-based goal (e.g., I will work on this for 30 minutes), and stick to it, even if you still feel energized or pain-free and think you can keep going. In this way, you are setting a “time-based” goal instead of a “feeling-based” goal, and less likely to overdo it. Your body will thank you the next day, when you might feel good enough to finish the task or engage in another enjoyable activity! The goal is to conserve some energy, reduce symptoms, and keep activity levels steady, rather than have one day of productivity or fun, followed by many days of inactivity, fatigue, pain, and low mood.

