

Enabling Self-management and Coping with Arthritic Pain using Exercise -
ESCAPE-pain for backs programme

Frequently Asked Questions for participants



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Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is ESCAPE-pain for backs and how can it help me?

ESCAPE-pain stands for **E**nabling **S**elf-management and **C**oping with **A**rthritic **P**ain using **E**xercise. It is a rehabilitation programme for people with chronic joint pain that integrates education and exercise.

ESCAPE-pain for backs will not cure nor eliminate pain completely. However, it aims to reduce pain, improve physical function, self-confidence, people's sense of being in control of their problems, and the depression and frustration that people with chronic pain often feel.

2. How do I know if ESCAPE-pain is right for me?

This programme is designed to benefit people with chronic low back pain.

If you have chronic knee/hip pain, please be sure to visit the: '[I have knee/hip pain](#)' section of the ESCAPE-pain website to learn more about the ESCAPE-pain for knees/hips programme.

3. How do I find a local class?

Please use our [site map](#) to find your nearest class. Once you have located a class you are interested in attending, we advise that you call the department /organisation that is running the class and ask what their referral pathway is. Some locations will allow you to self-refer while others will require that you are referred in through your GP. Alternatively, you can [email us](#) and share your postcode and we will provide you with the ESCAPE-pain for backs classes being delivered, nearest your location.

4. Will exercising make my pain worse?

Some people think that being more active will increase their pain, but after 1-2 sessions you will learn that exercise isn't painful and start to feel the benefits - better able to do the exercises, feel more confident and more in control.

5. Isn't rest the best thing you can do for your joints?

No. Strong, well-coordinated muscles are a necessity, not a luxury. They protect your back and can delay, even prevent, pain and disability, maintaining your independence and dignity.

6. I can't do strenuous exercise. Can I still benefit from the programme?

You do not need strenuous exercise to make your muscles stronger. Doing some physical activity regularly is better than doing nothing regularly – blood, sweat and tears are NOT essential.

7. How does the programme work?

You will attend two classes a week for 6 weeks, for a total of 12 classes. Each class starts with a brief (20 minutes) discussion around a set theme, (i.e., pain; what it is, simple ways to reduce it using heat, ice, or rest-activity cycling). This is then followed by 40 minutes of a circuit type exercise programme. It is important to commit to attending all 12 of the sessions to gain the benefits of the programme.

10. Do I need to do all the exercises in each session?

The course facilitator will work with you encouraging you to try to do as many exercises as you can, taking rest in between. The facilitator will work with you to make you more comfortable and confident in your abilities and to progress the exercises that you do each session.

11. How do I progress the exercises?

The exercises can be progressed in different ways depending on the exercise. Some (such as the number of sit to stands) can be progressed by trying to do more repetitions of the exercise in one minute. Others (such as the static exercise bike) can be progressed by doing them for a longer time – increasing from 1 to 2 to 5 minutes. Others (such as the exercises that use therabands) can be progressed by doing them for longer but also doing them slowly, in a controlled manner. The facilitator during your classes will work with you to ensure that you are progressing based on your abilities and goals.

12. What should I do before/during my first class?

To make sure the programme continues to be successful; you'll be asked to complete some questionnaires about your pain and management during your first class. You'll also be asked to complete questionnaires again at the end of the 6-week programme. This information is useful to see **how much progress you have made**, and to keep track of how ESCAPE-pain for backs is helping people. Please be sure to wear some loose-fitting clothing and comfortable shoes and bring along a water bottle (you will be completing some exercise circuits), and reading glasses (if required).

13. How do I set a goal?

Your facilitator will explain that it is easier to become more active and do more exercise if you set yourself a goal. You can start by thinking about something that you really want to do, for example, going to the park with the grandchildren or working in the garden for 30 minutes daily. You can then put together an **action plan**, explaining:

- What you want to achieve (your goal, for example, working in the garden daily)
- When you will achieve it (e.g., 3 months)
- How you will achieve it (e.g., completing ESCAPE-pain and continue to exercise twice a week after that)
- Where you will achieve it (e.g., exercising at home and at the local gym)

Your facilitator can help you in setting some short-term goals as steppingstones to achieve your main goal.

14. Why do I need to complete the questionnaires?

At the beginning and end of the programme we ask you to complete a questionnaire, which will result in a score. This will allow you to measure the progress you made throughout the programme. The outcome forms are anonymized and entered into a database that helps make the continued case to commissioners and decision makers that the programme is effective and should continue to be funded. Please do ask your facilitator to help you with the forms if you have any questions.

15. I have other health issues. Can I still go through the programme?

We oversee the delivery of the programme and provide training to healthcare providers who are interested in running classes. We aren't a healthcare provider and therefore are unable to give you specific advice on your condition.

We generally advise that if you have other medical conditions that prevent you from taking part in exercise programmes (such as unstable heart conditions, severe angina, blood pressure, your doctor has recently been altering your medication, you often fall or exercise makes you very breathless very soon after you begin to exercise), you should seek advice from your GP, nurse, or other healthcare practitioner.

You can also contact the Versus Arthritis helpline by phone (0800 5200 520) or email helpline@versusarthritis.org. Versus Arthritis have a team of advisors who can provide tips and advice on managing pain and arthritis. You may also wish to visit their [website](#) which has a range of patient resources and information which you may find helpful.

16. How do I contact someone for more information?

Please email hello@escape-pain.org if you have any further questions.

#LiveBetterDoMore

The ESCAPE-pain programme is an intervention for people with knee or hip osteoarthritis developed by Professor Mike Hurley. ESCAPE-pain is delivered by Orthopaedic Research UK under licence from Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust.

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