

The Boom and Bust Cycle

When you live with a chronic illness like MCAS, it's entirely common to have days that feel better and others that feel more challenging. Where you can, it's important to avoid pushing yourself too hard on those better days, as this can lead to a 'Boom and Bust Cycle,' making it tougher to manage both pain and fatigue. Practising patience and pacing your activities can be helpful.

Imagine this scenario: One morning, you wake up earlier than usual, with less pain and improved mobility. You sense that it's finally a 'good day' and decide to tackle the long list of tasks that you've been postponing. You work diligently throughout the day, taking only a few short breaks, driven by the desire to make the most of this rare occurrence. You feel in control of your pain and plan to do even more the next day. That night, you go to bed content, having accomplished all those pending tasks. But, the next morning, you feel worse than usual. After a night of interrupted sleep, you struggle to get out of bed and you're unable to undertake the planned tasks for the day because you feel too unwell.

Does this scenario sound familiar? This is what we call the 'Boom and Bust Cycle'. In the world of chronic illness, it's entirely normal to experience both 'good' and 'bad' days. However, if you overexert yourself on the good days, it can lead to an overcompensation of rest on the bad days. Trying to find a smoother path with more balance to your 'good' and 'bad' days can help to stop the cycle.

One way to achieve this balance is by practising patience and pacing yourself. It's understandable to want to make the most of your good days, but it's essential to recognise your limits and not push yourself too hard. Instead, try to break down your tasks into smaller, more manageable chunks, and take regular breaks in between. This way, you can conserve your energy and avoid triggering a flare-up. Additionally, prioritising self-care and rest on both good and bad days can help you maintain a more consistent level of energy and minimise the impact of the Boom and Bust Cycle. Remember, it's not a sign of weakness to take things slowly and listen to your body; it's a sign of strength and self-awareness.

