



MOORE THAN ARTHRITIS | DETAILED GUIDE

Managing Pain, Fatigue and Flare-Ups at Work

Build a work plan for steady days, difficult days and recovery.



WORKPLACE INCLUSION Practical, respectful and evidence-informed guidance for sustainable work.

Supporting People | Raising Awareness | Building Community | Living Beyond the Diagnosis

Stronger together. Beyond limits.

General workplace information - not individual medical or legal advice | Version 1.0 | August 2026



Managing Pain, Fatigue and Flare-Ups at Work

Build a work plan for steady days, difficult days and recovery.

KEY MESSAGE A sustainable plan protects safe performance and participation without expecting someone to work through severe or changing symptoms.

Baseline Understand usual capacity and work pattern.	Early signs Identify changes that suggest a difficult day or flare.	Task flexibility Pre-agree lower-demand or alternative tasks.
Recovery Use breaks, pacing and travel planning.	Clinical boundary Workplace support does not replace healthcare.	Review Frequent change may require occupational health or clinical input.

Scope This resource offers general workplace information. It cannot determine whether a person is legally disabled or what is reasonable in a specific case.



What can make workplace inclusion harder

Look beyond diagnosis labels to the interaction between the person, the role, the environment and workplace systems.

Pain masking The person appears productive while recovery worsens.	Meeting intensity No time exists for movement or recovery.	Manual repetition Grip, force or fixed posture accumulates strain.
Commute burden Travel reduces usable work energy.	Unsafe pressure Targets discourage reporting or breaks.	No flare route Decisions are improvised each time.

AVOID ASSUMPTIONS Individual experience, role demands and effective support vary.



Actions that may reduce disadvantage

Use a person-centred discussion and competent advice where needed. Adjustments should be effective, proportionate and reviewable.

Create a flare plan Define communication, task and review options.	Use paced work design Alternate demand and break repetition.	Adjust the environment Review workstation, tools and access.
Protect priority work Move non-essential demand where possible.	Use competent advice Involve OH, H&S or rehabilitation appropriately.	Check medical change New or severe symptoms need healthcare assessment.

Confidentiality Agree what information may be shared, with whom and for what practical purpose. Health information requires particular protection.



From first conversation to review

A consistent process improves trust, accountability and the chance that support works in practice.

1. Map symptoms and work demand
2. Identify warning signs and safety limits
3. Agree steady-day and flare-day options
4. Implement pacing and equipment changes
5. Review after a flare or role change
6. Seek further advice when needed

Questions for the conversation

- What work outcome matters most?
- Which task, practice or environment creates the barrier?
- What has helped or made things harder before?
- Which options should be tried or assessed?
- Who will act, by when, and when will we review?

Keep it practical Record the decision, reason, action owner, target date, confidentiality agreement and review point.



Use this page to prepare or record action

Complete only the fields that are relevant. Keep personal health information secure and share it only through appropriate routes.

1. My early warning signs are:

2. A task to pause or change is:

3. A lower-demand alternative is:

4. My contact route is:

5. A recovery support is:

6. Clinical/urgent boundary is:

Action record Decision: _____ Owner: _____ Target date: _____

Review date: _____ Measure of success: _____



Use the right route for the issue

Workplace inclusion can involve equality law, employment rights, health and safety, data protection, HR policy and medical care. One conversation may not resolve every part.

Important Call 999 for life-threatening symptoms. A suddenly hot swollen joint with fever, severe chest pain or major breathing difficulty needs urgent medical help.

Appropriate next steps may include

- Review the adjustment or work plan with the employee and manager
- Use HR, occupational health, health and safety or Access to Work where appropriate
- Seek medical advice for new, severe or worsening health symptoms
- Use a union, Acas, Citizens Advice or independent legal advice for employment concerns
- Call 999 for a life-threatening emergency or use NHS 111 for urgent medical help that is not an emergency

Jurisdiction Equality Act 2010 information in this resource applies to England, Scotland and Wales. Northern Ireland has separate disability-discrimination legislation and support routes.



Trusted workplace information

Use current primary guidance and obtain professional advice for the facts of an individual case.

- [1] **NHS - Living with rheumatoid arthritis.** Balancing activity, rest and health support. [Open source](#)
- [2] **NHS - Living with osteoarthritis.** Work and day-to-day support. [Open source](#)
- [3] **HSE - Musculoskeletal disorders.** Work-related musculoskeletal risk management. [Open source](#)
- [4] **HSE - Display screen equipment.** Workstation assessment, breaks and training. [Open source](#)
- [5] **Acas - Reasonable adjustments.** Making, discussing, recording and reviewing adjustments. [Open source](#)
- [6] **Acas - Occupational health assessments.** Consent, confidentiality and assessment. [Open source](#)

Evidence checked: 21 August 2026. Review sooner if UK employment, equality, health or data-protection guidance changes.

Related Moore Than Arthritis workplace resources

- Talking to Your Employer About Arthritis
- Reasonable Adjustments in Practice
- Managing Pain, Fatigue and Flare-Ups at Work
- Line Manager Support Toolkit
- Workplace Accessibility Self-Assessment Toolkit

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Disclaimer This resource provides general educational information and is not medical, occupational-health, employment or legal advice. Moore Than Arthritis does not determine disability status, employment rights or the reasonableness of an adjustment. Obtain advice from an appropriately qualified professional about individual circumstances.

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