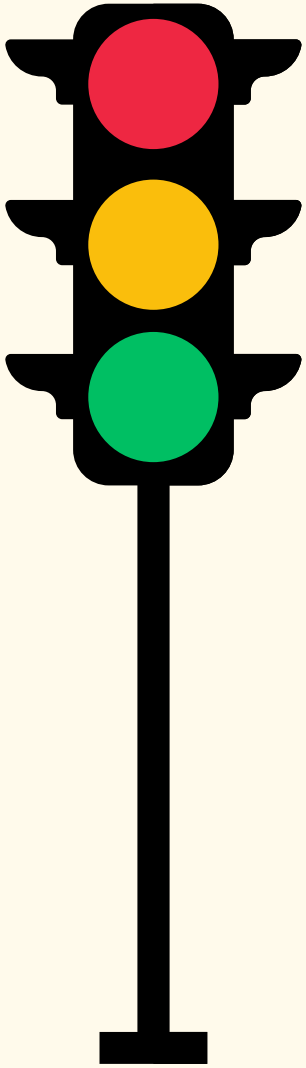
ACTIVITY STOPLIGHT

Sometimes, we misunderstand our pain, thinking it's worse than it is or that it means we're hurting ourselves. These thoughts can make our brain more sensitive to pain signals, which can unintentionally intensify or prolong the pain. This helpful graphic teaches you how to manage your daily activities while rethinking and understanding your pain better.



	LEVEL OF PAIN	ACTION PLAN
RED	A significant spike in sharp or radiating pain during activity or increased pain that lasts more than 48 hours following activity.	Stop the activity and notify your provider so they can assess your pain, modify your activity, and help get you back to action.
YELLOW	A manageable elevation of pain between 3-5 on a 0-10 scale.	Recognize that pain is a normal reaction and does not necessarily mean that any harm is occurring. Recognize that the amount of pain you are experiencing does not correlate with the amount of tissue damage. Consider slowing your activity pace or duration if needed.
GREEN	Pain increases during activity to a mild to moderate level and fades within the next day.	Recognize that movement can be uncomfortable, but it does not necessarily mean that you are harming yourself. Slow down for acute or radiating pain, but unless directed otherwise, *nudge* into manageable discomfort. Gradually and confidently increase your activity by no more than 10% per session.

Inspired by: Kolski MC, O'Connor A. A World of Hurt: A Guide to Classifying Pain," 2015.