

CASE STUDY – BACK-TRACK for Rehabilitation - NHS TRUST

Emily, an office based Manager working for the NHS had been suffering from regular flare ups of pain in her hip, coupled with stiffness after spending prolonged periods sitting at her desk.



Numerous consultations with various medical specialists eventually diagnosed the problem as referred pain from her back.

In 2013, after another flare up of pain, Emily was issued with a BACK-TRACK device which was programmed to vibrate if she was inactive for an extended period of time. BACK-TRACK monitors activity by detecting walking and when used for rehabilitation of an injury, alerts the wearer if they do not achieve at least 2 minutes of walking per hour. Evidence shows that a break from a desk, i.e., by walking, provides a postural break and can be beneficial to DSE users in helping to reduce the discomfort associated with upper limb disorders¹.

NHS

Within 48 hours the BACK-TRACK had identified that Emily was very inactive – typically only walking for a few minutes during the day. The BACK-TRACK device made her aware of the need to change her habits and also reinforced previous advice given to her by the Trust's Back Care Advisor.

Emily wore the BACK-TRACK for approximately 2 weeks and the real-time alerts highlighted when she was inactive. This helped her recovery as it had highlighted how inactive she was – which came as a bit of a surprise – and encouraged her to change her behaviour.

When used for rehabilitation, BACK-TRACK encourages activity every hour as evidence suggests this is more effective than longer, infrequent breaks. Shorter, regular breaks are generally found to be more effective in reducing musculoskeletal discomfort².

Emily's hip pain is now under control and when she does feel the onset of pain, she knows exactly what to do.

After wearing the BACK-TRACK device, Emily commented that *"it's a way of really making people realise what their postural sitting habits are"*.

1. Williams C, Denning E, Baird, A and Sheffield D. Move more - Investigating the impact of behaviour change techniques on break taking behaviour at work. Institute of Safety and Health, 2014. www.iosh.co.uk/movemore

2. Health and Safety Executive. L26 - work with display screen equipment: health and safety (display screen equipment) regulations 1992 as amended by the health and safety (miscellaneous amendments) regulations 2002. HSE Books, 2003.

keeping track of backs™

For more information

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