Participants excluded

Participants randomised (n=80)

Week 1

Baseline assessment (including 7 days of activity monitoring) plus ‘The Back Book’

Weeks 2-7

Group A
Weekly supervised exercise (1hr session) plus manual auricular acupuncture (x48hrs)

Group B
Weekly supervised exercise session (1hr session)

Week 25

Assessment (including 7 days of activity monitoring) **

Week 7-8

Assessment (including 7 days of activity monitoring) **

Weeks 8-13

Telephone helpline available to participants

Week 13

Telephone contact by therapist to reinforce exercise message (plus follow-up postal assessment including 7 days of activity monitoring)

Follow-up postal assessment 6 months after randomisation (including 7 days of activity monitoring)

**Optional focus groups with participants will be organised following week 13 or week 25 in order to get feedback on the trial procedures and the programme of care. Face-to-face interviews with GP practices will also be organised to identify the optimum methods of recruitment and get feedback on study information.