

PAIN



First Aid



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TYPES OF PAIN

- 01. Acute pain** is usually a result of tissue damage and swelling and typically fades as the injury or damage heals after a few days or weeks.
- 02. Chronic primary pain** refers to pain that persists for at least three months. This is also sometimes referred to as persistent pain. The pain is associated with significant emotional distress and/or significant functional disability. It is often related to central sensitisation (definition below) and high unmet needs for pain management.

TYPES OF PAIN

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Cancer pain can be caused by both early and advanced-stage cancer. It can also be a side-effect of treatment.

04.

Central sensitisation is a neurological, often opioid-induced condition that causes significant and distressing pain, as well as functional impairment. The pain is real, and often debilitating. It occurs when pain-related nerves transmit pain-related information on a regular basis and in the absence of tissue injury. It is a learned response of the brain, but can be unlearned through lifestyle changes and pain management.

BYE-BYE PAIN!



Under-managed pain can result in increased disability and disease burden, reduced quality of life, and increase a person's use of health services.

Under-managed pain may lead to psychological distress (e.g., depression, anxiety), poor sleep, exhaustion, and relationship and career issues.

Pain Self- management

Wait a minute, why me? Aren't health professionals supposed to do that for me?

Many people with persistent pain see their health care professional for treatment, help and support.

But have you estimated just how many hours during a year you spend with your health care professional?

It has been said that people with health conditions spend less than 3 hours a year on average in contact with a health care professional.

For the remaining time they are on their own. So, the need to learn pain skills and incorporate them in their everyday activities is very important. It is certainly not all up to your health professional to manage your pain.

**You must play a vital part as well
- it is all about teamwork.**

HOW CAN I BECOME MORE INVOLVED?

Let's get started with your pain self management skills.

Accept that you have persistent pain

Acceptance is not about giving up. It is recognising that you need to take more control and find how you can better self-manage your pain.

All you have to do is to be willing to try doing things differently.

Get involved - building a support team

Being successful in pain self-management means getting help and support from others. Build up your team of health professionals, friends, family, work colleagues and even support groups in your community or online.

Asking for help and support is not a sign of weakness but a sign of strength.

Remember managing your pain is not a 'one-way street' and it is unrealistic for your health professional to solve it. You have an important part to play.

Pacing

Pacing in short is: taking a break before you need it throughout the day. It is one of the key tools to self management.

Pacing is carrying out activities one bite at a time, and not tackling all of them at once.

Learn to prioritise and plan out your day

Make a list of things you would like to do but remember to be flexible. It is a great way to set yourself a starting point.

For example:

- Monday a.m. - vacuum the living room and have a couple of breaks so that I pace myself.
- Monday p.m.- prepare food for evening meal - alternate between sitting and standing, ask someone to help with all the ingredients ect.

Setting Goals/Action Plans

You cannot run before you can walk, so to avoid this happening set yourself, simple, realistic goals or action plans. Perhaps, you could set yourself a simple hourly, daily or weekly action plan.

Practice patience

Take things steadily. It may take you a few weeks or months to see changes or improvements. When you start to feel good, you may want to catch up with activities that you may have let go of. Don't be tempted to overdo it otherwise your chances of yet another setback.

PAIN FIRST AID

Learn relaxation skills

Relaxation skills are important for relaxing tense muscles and unwinding the busy mind.

Relaxation could be:

- ◆ Reading a book
- ◆ Listening to some music
- ◆ Gardening (pacing)
- ◆ Meeting friends for a coffee/tea
- ◆ Going to the cinema or a restaurant
- ◆ Relaxation exercises
- ◆ Meditation (Mindfulness)
- ◆ Dancing (pacing)
- ◆ Walking (pacing)



Stretching & Exercise



Many people with pain fear exercise in case it causes more problems. However this is not true. Regular stretching and exercising decreases pain and discomfort. It warms up the body and prepares for other activities. If you are in pain, remember that unfit and under used muscles gives more pain than strong ones. Talk with your physiotherapist about an individually tailored exercise programme that you can work on steadily and safely.

In terms, this will help you build your confidence, muscle and joint strength and will help to reduce your pain.

TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

Keeping a diary 01

Tracking your progress will help you to see how far you have come and note the successes you have achieved. This will help you to build on success.

It also can highlight things that don't work, so you'll be able to adapt how to deal with them differently.

Have a set-back plan 02

Setbacks are usually caused by doing too much – overdoing it, pressure from others, or just forgetting how to deal with pain. Try not to get annoyed with yourself, it can cause more stress and pain.

Make a note of your triggers and create a list of your helpful tools:

- pacing
- heat/ cold
- gentle exercise
- relaxation

Bringing it all together

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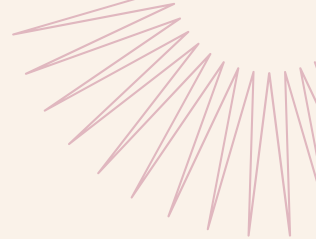
You may be asking yourself do I have to do it? "What, every day"? The simple answer is Yes.

Just like brushing your teeth, self managing your pain will become easy once it is a habit.

Make sure you get others involved, ask for help, set yourself a reminder,

It takes 66 days of repetition to form a habit so be patient.

LOOK AFTER YOUR BODY



Healthy Sleep

Poor sleep is common in people with chronic pain, it can:

- contribute to feelings of anxiety and depression
- increase levels of the stress hormone cortisol

All of which can contribute to pain and further interfere with sleep.

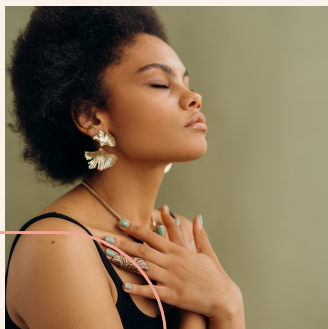
Yet, it is important for you to get quality sleep.



Healthy Food

Specific diets can help to reduce weight and inflammation, which are associated with chronic and persistent pain.

Dietitians can advise in these areas.

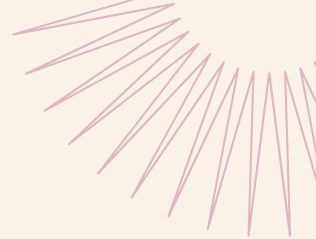


Meditation

Mindfulness meditation is a form of psychological practice that teaches you how to slow down thinking and bring calmness to your mind and body.

Techniques vary, but mostly involve breathing strategies that reduce conscious awareness of pain and related thoughts.

LOOK AFTER YOUR BODY



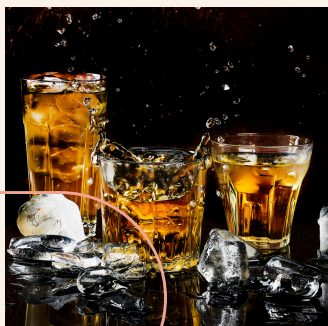
Medication

Pain medications help to reduce pain in the short-term, but over time can increase pain perception, central sensitisation, as well as neuropathic pain. Opioids can also induce hyperalgesia (enhanced central sensitisation to pain), and should therefore be avoided, where possible. There is also increasing evidence that frequent opioid use can lead to addiction, and accidental death. Remember to only follow your GP's advice.



Smoking

Cigarette smoking has been cited as risk factor for a wide variety of painful conditions like lower back pain, headaches and neuropathic pain. Smoking appears to be associated with both the severity and development of pain. Studies suggest that smoking changes the way that the brain processes sensory stimuli and perceives pain.



Alcohol

Recent studies suggest that around 1 in 4 adults with chronic pain reports self medicating with alcohol. While it can alleviate the pain places people at risk of number of harmful health consequences and leads to addiction.

LET'S GET IN TOUCH



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