

Chronic Pain

25.3 million adults in the United States suffer from chronic pain. Chronic pain is one of the most debilitating physical problems a person can experience. Difficulty coping with chronic pain can create problems in families and workplaces.

But There's Hope!

Learning to cope better can help decrease feelings of pain, increase sense of control and improve overall quality of life.



Coping with Chronic Pain

Chronic pain is pain that lasts six months or longer. It can develop after injury, accident, surgery, or illness. Chronic pain affects the way we think, feel, and act. Sometimes our negative pain-related thoughts can lead to anger, depression, and anxiety. We may also limit our physical activity in response to pain flare-ups. However, coping skills can help to improve everyday pain experience. Therapy works!

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Coping with Chronic Pain

What Doesn't Work?

- Engaging in wishful thinking
- Limiting too many activities of daily life
- Dwelling on emotions

Why?

- They lead to worse emotional and physical health
- They lead to more depression
- They lead to less control of pain experience
- They lead to more tension and a resistance to accepting the illness

So What Works?

- Staying active
- Ignoring the pain
- Attempting to go on with daily life the best you can

Believing that you can manage your pain despite the challenges will decrease your risk of depression and increase your quality of life!

Mindfulness:

A relaxation technique for stress reduction

- Focus on being present in the moment
- Examples: Progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery, and deep belly breathing

Time-Based pacing:

Continuing your daily activities in smaller bursts of time

- Pay attention to your pain experience to avoid pain flare-ups
- Track your pain severity on a scale of 1-10
- Allow small periods of time to rest between activities to let your body recuperate

Consult both medical and psychological professional

- They can provide education on how pain affects your body, side effects of medicine, and alternative therapies.