8 Things You Can Do Today to Help Relieve Chronic Pain

by ERIN SCOTT

Chronic Pain Relief: A How-To Guide

Living with chronic pain can be frustrating. You want to do anything to get relief from the unrelenting, stabbing, aching and/or burning.

Medicine and doctors can help. However, there is a lot that we can do at home to help alleviate our pain ourselves.

There Are Two Sides to Pain

There are two approaches to chronic pain. One is dealing with the physical symptoms and helping to treat the aches and pains that we feel. The other is looking after our emotional and mental health.

It is now widely recognized that our stress levels, as well as depression and anxiety, can negatively affect how our bodies feel. That makes looking after our mental and emotional health just as important as looking after our physical health!

By investing in both our physical and emotional and mental health, we can work on better managing our chronic pain.

How to Deal With Physical Pain

There are many things that you can do at home to help your chronic pain, depending on what type of pain you have. With all of these suggestions, it is a good idea to check with your medical professionals to make sure they are safe for you.

Hot or Cold Packs

Hot and cold packs can be a lifesaver for many with chronic pain. If you have inflammation, cold can help bring it down. Cold wraps have also been reported to be helpful for some people who have migraines.

Heat can also be great. I love my hot water bottle. It saves me when my stomach is in severe pain.

Pacing and Rest

Rest and proper pacing of activities are very important to managing chronic pain. If you find yourself flaring up a lot, think about your schedule and consider how busy you are. Are you allowing yourself time to rest? Are you scheduling yourself too much in each day or week?

Try to ensure that you are allowing yourself some down time each day, and each week, so that you are not

pushing yourself too hard.

Getting a Good Night's Sleep

Getting a good night's sleep is a difficult task for many people with chronic pain. We often wake up in pain, cannot sleep, or just have an odd sleep schedule. Unfortunately, studies have shown that disturbed sleep can make pain worse.

To try and ensure you sleep as best as you can practice good sleep hygiene by making sure your bedroom is clean and comfortable.

Personally, I have found podcasts and audiobooks very helpful. I listen to them at night and they help me relax and distract me from the pain. Then, I can fall asleep much quicker than I could before, and I am not up for as long in the night.

Exercise

Realistically, the last thing many of us want to do when we are in pain is to get up and exercise. Finding an appropriate activity and routine, however, will help us manage chronic pain by helping to stretch and strengthen our bodies and provides us with a distraction and happy endorphins.

You do not need to join a gym, start running, or do anything dramatic if you are not up to it though. Figure out what you can do. Gentle stretches, yoga, walking, seated chair workouts, classes, or aqua fit, are all good options.

TENS Machine

A transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) machine is a small device that provides a small electrical current through electrodes placed strategically on your body. Some people find that it helps provide pain relief.

Mental and Emotional Strategies

Your mental and emotional health are critical to your physical wellbeing. If you feel you need to see a counselor or mental health professional, please speak to your doctor. Otherwise, there are many ways you can de-stress and take charge of your stress levels at home.

Focus on Your Breathing

I find that when my pain is very intense, my breathing often changes. I find myself focused on my breathing because it helps me deal with the pain that I am having.

In fact, focusing on one's breathing is a coping technique for stressful situations and anxiety. If you find yourself very stressed, or in a lot of pain, maybe check some out and see if they help.

Meditation and Mindfulness

Meditation and mindfulness are not the same things, but they are both relaxation practices that have been shown to help reduce stress and anxiety. They both require an open mind and a willingness to engage. If you are happy to try, then they can help you relax and calm your mind.

There are plenty of websites, videos, and apps for your phone for both meditation and mindfulness. They will all take different approaches, so if you do not like one, do not give up! Try a few different ones until you hit on one that works for you.

Socializing

Living with chronic pain, we can often isolate ourselves. That can lead to us feeling down, or depressed. A simple way to fix that is to make sure that we see our friends and family on a regular basis.

However, if you find it hard to see them in person, try to set up phone calls, or a video chat. Or even consider joining a social club locally, or online. That way you still feel connected.

You Got This

Managing chronic pain is a tough job, and it is important to remember that there are a lot of tools at your disposal.

Sleep, TENS machines and pacing can all help keep our symptoms at bay, and it is also crucial that we look after our mental and emotional wellbeing too. In addition to the above suggestions, think about whatever activities or things that you like to do that relaxes you and add more of them into your life.

You are not alone in your pain struggle, but armed with the tools to manage pain better at home, you can do this.