Enjoying Thanksgiving With Chronic Pain

by AMY MANLEY

Top Tips for Thanksgiving With Chronic Pain

While chronic pain is hard to deal with on any given day, the holiday season can add a bit more difficulty to the equation. You don't want to miss out on the festivities of Thanksgiving, but you may be hesitant to participate.

Whether you've thought of avoiding Thanksgiving due to your chronic pain, or are set on participating but are worried about how much you'll enjoy the holiday, this guide can help. Surviving – and enjoying – Thanksgiving with chronic pain is possible for anyone.

Go Stress-Free

The holidays can add a lot of stress to the lives of those with chronic pain. It can be overwhelming, as you have to go and go without much time to sit back and give your body the rest it needs to reduce your levels of pain. Make time for stress-busting activities like yoga, meditation and deep breathing techniques.

Additionally, changing your mindset can do wonders for both your physical and mental well-being – more than many people realize. By deciding you're going to have a stress-free holiday that you enjoy, you'll be much more likely to enjoy the time.

Get Rid of Guilt

A lot of people with chronic pain feel some guilt because they feel like they're a burden. Because you're unable to go about your days free from pain in most cases, you can't do everything you want to, whether that's around the house or taking part in things like family activities. You may also find yourself expressing your frustration to loved ones more often than you'd like.

While it's easy to let guilt take over, it's not going to get you anywhere. Guilt is one of the least useful human emotions, because it often shows face in situations that it doesn't belong.

Rather than feel guilty about something you can't do, you need to understand that by staying home at certain times and venting to others about your pain, you're simply coping with the issues you're faced with and taking good care of yourself.

Guilt just makes everything worse, and that's something you have to remember, especially during the holidays.

Prioritize

One of the best ways to enjoy Thanksgiving with chronic pain is to narrow down which areas of the holiday are most important to you personally. While some people feel the time spent mingling with friends and family is most important, others feel like dinner together is without doubt the most important part of the holiday.

Rather than push yourself too hard, consider stopping by for the meal, or spending an hour mingling with family and friends after dinner is over, based on what you value most.

Plan Ahead

Just like other holidays like Christmas, Thanksgiving can result in last minute store-runs, or trying to bake a pie in six hours that truly needs a 24-hour window of time.

One of the most important steps you can take to surviving Thanksgiving with chronic pain is to buy everything days before and have everything you want to cook out of the way about 24-48 hours prior. This will prevent you from pushing yourself too hard as Thanksgiving gets closer.