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Coping with Pain

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Coping with Pain

Description

This patient education handout shares coping with pain strategies.

Keywords

coping, pain, occupational therapy, breathing, mindfulness, relaxation

Disciplines

Occupational Therapy | Rehabilitation and Therapy

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Coping With Your Pain

-
- What you can do to help:**
- **Break things into steps**
 - **Relax**
 - **Do what you love!**
-

Break things into steps

Break everyday activities into small steps. Being active by taking little steps can help you cope with your pain.

Why? Doing too much may cause your pain to be worse. Not being active can also lead to more pain.

Small steps help you to:

- **Do more of what is important to you**
- **Have less pain**
- **Reduce pain in the future**
- **Feel more in control of your life**

Know your limits!



Tips for taking small steps:

- Do a little bit at a time.
- Take regular rest breaks.
- Carry light loads.
- Roll or push larger items.

- Do a difficult activity and then an easier one to give your body rest.
- Change your body position often.
- On a good day, do not do more than normal.
- On a bad day, do some easy activities.
- Remember to be kind to yourself.
- Ask for help when needed.



- Take a short break every few minutes.
- Take a longer break every hour.

Relax

When you relax:

- you calm your mind
- reduce your stress
- rest your muscles
- improve your mood.






Ways to Relax

Relaxing Activities:

- **Deep Breathing:** Breathe deeply, so that your belly moves in and out like a balloon. Watch as it gets bigger and then smaller as you breathe each time. Breathe in to a count of four: 1... 2... 3... 4..., hold for a count of four: 1... 2... 3... 4..., and breathe out to a count of four: 1... 2... 3... 4.... Repeat this ten times.
- **Think of a calm place:** Breathe slowly and deeply. As you breathe, think of a calm place where you feel comfortable, safe, and relaxed. Include colors, sounds, smells, and your feelings. Do this five to ten minutes each day.
- **Self-talk:** Change how you talk to yourself about your pain. If you start to say something to yourself like “pain stops me from keeping the house clean the way I used to. That makes me feel bad.” Instead say to yourself “it is okay if the house is not perfect. I can get a lot done by breaking down the things I have to clean into small steps.”
- **Mindfulness:** Sit or lie quietly and notice your breathing. Do not control it. Just notice it. If pain or thoughts come to mind, simply notice them. Do not try to push them away. Think of those things as a cloud passing over you, then return to focus on your breath. Try to do this for 20 minutes.



Do not get stressed trying to pick the "right" relaxation skill.
Choose the thing that relaxes you!

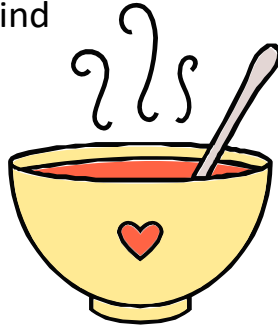


Do what you love!

Doing things you love can make you feel less pain. It is called the therapy of distraction because it keeps your mind busy.

What can you do?

- Listen to music
- Sing or play an instrument
- Get and give a hug
- Garden
- Do arts or crafts
- Read a good book
- Drink a cup of tea or coffee
- Make a card and send it to a love one
- Go for a walk





Do what works for you and do it every day!

It is easier to take care of and cope with pain before it becomes really bad. Follow your doctor's advice for how and when to take your pain medicine. To cope with your pain, remember to use the tips and tools that prove helpful for you, and do them often.

You can do it!

References:

- <https://www.webmd.com/pain-management/guide/stress-relief-for-pain/>
- <https://painhealth.csse.uwa.edu.au/pain-module/pacing-and-goal-setting/>

