

Non-Medication and Complimentary Persistent Pain Treatment Options

Gentle Movement

The goal is to stay as active as possible. Here are some gentle options that can aid in this process:

Tai Chi is an ancient Chinese system of meditative movements practiced as exercises. It is a gentle form of exercise, now popularized in the western world. People of all ages and abilities can use these movements to gain strength and flexibility. Ongoing research suggests that Tai Chi is an effective treatment in improving physical functioning of those with chronic pain.

Yoga creates a greater sense of health and well-being by emphasizing mindful practice, breath awareness and proper body alignment. Yoga helps to manage chronic pain through movements that increase flexibility, strength and relaxation. Beginners should start with a slow-paced program.

Water therapy exercise programs consist of a variety of treatments and exercises that are done in a pool and may be specifically designed to provide relief of pain. These exercises are low impact on joints and service to condition and strengthen muscles to avoid future injury.

Social Support

Persistent pain can be isolating. Pain does not just impact the individual living with it; it impacts everyone around that individual. This includes family, friends, employers and co-workers. The individual with persistent pain may need to rely more on others for physical assistance and emotional support as well. Being in pain can be an emotional roller coaster and this can negatively impact communication with loved ones, which strains relationships. There are many ways to build support:

- Educate your loved ones about your condition.
- Maintaining friendships and relationships.
- Getting out of the house as much as possible to avoid isolation.
- Use community resources, such as support groups, neighbors, churches or other religious organizations.
- Make and keep appointments with a therapist who can guide and support you on your pain journey.
- Find and engage in an online community of people who have the same sorts of challenges as you.

Epsom Salt Bath

Epsom salts can be purchased at a local drug store. When absorbed through the skin, Epsom salts work to relieve muscle tension, pain and inflammation in joints. For increased absorption add a ½ cup of baking soda to your bath.

Heat and Ice Therapy

Ice can be used for acute injury and to resolve inflammation. Heat is especially good for muscles, chronic pain and stress. Here are some tools you may find useful: Ice pack, heating pad, rice or corn bag that can be heated in the microwave or a heated blanket for all over body pain.

Meditation

Medication can reduce pain, reduce stress, improve brain function, increase self-awareness, improve sleep and boost immunity. With meditation the physiology undergoes a change and every cell in the body is filled with more energy. To maximize benefits of meditation regular practice is recommended. It only takes a few minutes every day. You can search online resources for guided meditation which is an easy way to start.

Massage

Body work consisting of rubbing, kneading and stretching of muscles and joints of the body with the hands, especially to relieve tension or pain.

The benefits of massage are:

- relaxes the whole body
- loosens tight muscles
- relieves tired and aching muscles
- increases flexibility and range of motion
- diminishes chronic pain
- calms the nervous system
- lowers blood pressure
- lowers heart rate
- enhances skin tone
- assists in recovery from injuries and illness
- strengthens the immune system
- reduces tension headaches
- reduces mental stress
- improves concentration
- promotes restful sleep
- aids in mental relaxation

Acupuncture and Acupressure

Acupuncture and acupressure are both body work used to stimulate points of the body. Acupuncture uses a hair-thin needle to stimulate a point where as acupressure uses a firm pressure to massage the points.

Some of the benefits of healing touch aids in relieving pain, balancing body energy, and maintaining good health. Enabling deep relaxation and relieving stress, Acupressure Therapy strengthens resistance to disease and promotes wellness.

TENS Unit (muscle stimulator)

TENS, or transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation, is a treatment that uses low voltage electric current to relieve pain. TENS is typically done with a TENS unit, a small battery-operated device. The device can be hooked to a belt and is connected to two electrodes. The electrodes carry an electric current from the TENS machine to the skin. It changes messages your nerves send to your brain and can give a sense of pain relief. You have the ability to change intensities and location of electrodes on your body.

Physical Therapy

Physical therapy is a type of treatment you may need when health problems make it hard to move around and do everyday tasks. It helps you move better and may relieve pain. It also helps improve or restore your physical function and your fitness level.

The goal of physical therapy is to make daily tasks and activities easier. For example, it may help with walking, going up stairs, or getting in and out of bed.

Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants help people participate in the things they want and need to do through the therapeutic use of everyday activities (occupations). They will help you identify barriers and find ways to make your environment work for you while using best practices to keep your body safe.

Nutritional Support

Nutritional approaches to pain management can involve both changes in diet and the use of dietary supplements, including vitamins, minerals, enzymes and other substances. These strategies can be used to prevent pain, such as migraine headache, or promote the relief of pain and inflammation as part of a comprehensive pain management strategy.

Bio Feedback

Biofeedback is a type of therapy where sensors attached to your body measure key body functions. Biofeedback is intended to help you learn more about how your body works, so that you can develop better control over certain body functions and address health concerns.

Supplements

Research which supplements are good for which types of pain. Be sure to work with your care provider before taking any supplements because some can affect your health or medicines that you take.

Topical Pain Relief

Pain relief from sprays, patches and creams can be very affective for many types of pain. Lidocaine patches for example can target specific areas of persistent pain to help you become more functional. Supplements and medications can also be administered through creams and sprays applied directly on your skin. Some of these are over the counter medications, others such as Lidocaine patches are prescribed by your care provider.

Medical Marijuana/ Cannabis

Cannabis has been known to reduce pain, calm anxiety and assist with sleep. It can be taken as a CBD oil, a capsule, an edible, topically or inhaled. Medical marijuana is not monitored like FDA-approved medicines.