

wee changes can make a **Wee difference** to living with Chronic Pain

These tips do not replace the advice or treatment of a health care professional. If you suffer chronic pain, please do consult your GP and any specialists they may refer you to for treatment

Suicide

Sometimes feelings of chronic pain can be so overwhelming you may think of suicide and with the medication you may be on for your condition, have the means to kill yourself readily available. It's important if you are having thoughts of suicide that you speak to someone. You matter.

Relaxation

Techniques used regularly can help manage the stress of chronic pain as well as perhaps help ease suffering when pain is acute. We are all different, so find a technique that works for you.



Mindfulness Practice

Consider learning a mindfulness practice which can help make living with chronic pain more bearable. Mindfulness isn't about taking the pain away all together, it is learning how to experience relief while you are in pain, which can be priceless. However, takes time to learn, hence called Mindfulness practice. Worth investing time into and making it a goal.

Be active within bounds of medical advice

You need to check with your medical team for an activity that works for you, but keeping active, mentally and physically helps along with good stress management techniques including eating a healthy balanced diet, to enable you to have improved physical and psychological wellbeing to help manage the pain and not let it take over your whole life. You are more than your pain.

Appreciation

Locking into how awful our pain is, how we fear we may not be able to cope with it, can be overwhelming. We feel our life, as we knew it, has changed, lost, gone forever. Hard as this may be, try and remember what you can still do. This helps reframe our self-talk as we begin to look for things we can appreciate still in our lives. Somethings pain takes, somethings we give away, learn to appreciate what is still good and if you need help to do this, speak to a health care professional.

Self-talk

Self-talk can be immensely powerful for helping draw our focus away from our pain. Reminding ourselves how sore we feel, is like shining a spotlight on our pain. Reframing our internal voice to accept living with pain due to our condition, isn't something we want to do, but in doing it, we can retrain our mind into remembering pain is not the only thing we have in our lives, and so we can learn to suffer less.

Pace Yourself

It can be tempting on a day you are maybe feeling less pain or, pain free to catch up on all the things you weren't able to do. Please! Pace yourself, overdoing it can set you back. Take it easy and gradually. One or two steps each day leaving you feeling you could do more, will get you further than 20 steps if that means for a month you find it hard to do anything again as you are in pain.



Complementary Therapies

Ensure anyone offering these is fully qualified and does take note of your medical condition and any medication you maybe taking. Speak to your medical team who maybe able to advise you on reputable therapists.

Prioritise

Each of us has a finite amount of energy. When we are living with a long-term condition which may also mean living with chronic pain, a lot of our emotional and physical energy can be tied up managing that. Use energy wisely so you have enough to invest in the things which matter to you. You may have family, children, friends, who can be a source of joy. Learn where to put your energy to most effect so you don't find times you may have had fun; you are so exhausted you have went to bed and missed it.

Have a dream

Sometimes when we are suffering chronic pain our focus is how we get through the next day, hour, minute. Any dreams become dependent on 'if I wasn't sore' However, we all need a dream, yes managing pain is important however, is that your only goal? There is life beyond your pain, consider what else matters to you and if needs be, seek help to set goals. It can be as simple as I will practice relaxation 3minutes every day. Start with a wee step, see where your imagination takes you.



Avoid unhelpful coping strategies

Sometimes to cope we resort to unhelpful coping strategies, misusing alcohol which is risky when on medication. Gambling as it's a distraction maybe even company? Smoking, overeating. There are many strategies which are not helpful and may make our pain worse. If this is an issue for you, please, speak to someone.

Managing Stress

Living with chronic pain in itself can be stressful as can the other challenges associated with chronic pain. Maybe your home is no longer suitable, as you have too many stairs to climb, or relationships are suffering. Learn to manage stress, is another step towards suffering less.

Distraction Techniques

Techniques can help take the 'spotlight' off your pain. 6minutes reading, 1minute to drink a glass of water, 5minutes of some activity/exercise approved by your medical team, 3minutes relaxation, a crossword puzzle, play a video game, patience, mindful colouring in. We are all different, find something works for you which helps take your attention away from your pain.

Useful information and contacts

If you are thinking of suicide due to chronic pain phone the Samaritans **T: 116 123**

Or text **SHOUT** to **85258** to text with a trained Crisis Volunteer

Alcoholics Anonymous
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Free Mindfulness
www.freemindfulness.org/download

Gambling harms www.gamcare.org.uk

Overeaters anonymous
www.oagb.org.uk/scotland

The Pain association Scotland
www.painassociation.co.uk

Scottish National Residential Pain Management Programme www.snrpmp.scot.nhs.uk

Sign up for free newsletter on chronic pain management www.webmd.com/pain-management/guide/11-tips-for-living-with-chronic-pain#1

Tips on stress management, self-talk relaxation, and wellbeing
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