



# TIPS

## for Coping With Chronic Pain

Living with chronic pain is not easy. Although coping strategies won't take your pain away, they can help you get to a level where you can deal with it and lead a healthy, productive life in spite of your pain.

- ❑ **Cultivate healthy habits.** Develop and practice a lifestyle that includes plenty of rest, exercise, healthy nutrition, and a positive mental attitude.
- ❑ **Modify activities.** Create a daily routine that eliminates or modifies activities that use a lot of energy or cause pain.
- ❑ **Exercise.** Physical exercise helps increase strength and flexibility and can help reduce pain. Talk to your doctor about what exercises are appropriate for you.
- ❑ **Reduce stress.** Depression, anxiety, stress, and anger can increase the body's sensitivity to pain. Relaxation techniques, guided imagery, meditation, deep breathing, biofeedback,

and progressive muscle relaxation all can help reduce stress and promote relaxation.

- ❑ **Join a support group.** Meeting with others who are coping with chronic pain can help you realize that you are not alone. You may also benefit from their experiences and coping strategies.
- ❑ **Keep a pain journal.** Track your pain levels daily, and note what activities you did each day. This may help you identify patterns that can then be addressed through lifestyle modifications. Bring your pain journal to every doctor visit.
- ❑ **Be compliant with medications.** Prescription drugs and OTCs work best when they are taken as directed. Also, stopping some medicines without a doctor's approval can be dangerous.
- ❑ **Distract yourself.** Focusing on your pain makes it worse, not better. Devote some attention to activities you enjoy. This may take your mind off your pain.

*This page is part of an ongoing series of practical tips for patients with neurologic disorders. If you have compiled clinically relevant tips that you wish to share, please contact the editor at [info@neurologyreviews.com](mailto:info@neurologyreviews.com).*