



TIPS

for Dealing With Chronic Pain

Chronic pain, which can range from mild to severe, affects countless people each year. However, chronic pain does not have to ruin your life. By accepting the pain and making certain lifestyle changes, you may be able to better cope with your condition.

Partner with your health care team. You play the most important role in your own health care, but you should also feel comfortable talking with your doctor, because he or she can offer expert opinion and advice.

Get an adequate amount of sleep. Getting the proper amount of sleep is vital, which is why you should get at least six hours of sleep each night. While we sleep, the body restores many of the necessary hormones it needs to function.

Exercise your way to feeling better. By exercising just 30 minutes a day, three or four times a week, you can increase your endurance, strength, and flexibility. Exercise also can be a great mood booster.

Eat a well-balanced diet. Everyone can benefit from eating a well-balanced diet, including those with chronic pain. Properly balancing your diet can aid your digestive process, help you maintain a healthy weight, improve your blood sugar levels, and reduce your risk for heart disease.

Practice the art of deep breathing. Deep breathing can help ease pain, and it is also a relaxation technique. Find a quiet location, a comfortable body position, and block out distracting thoughts. Let the air fill you from the abdomen up, and then let it out slowly.

Know the ins and outs of chronic pain. The more you learn about chronic pain, the better. Chronic pain symptoms can include a feeling of discomfort such as soreness, stiffness, or tightness, and pain that can be described as burning, aching, or shooting.

Remember that you are not alone. You may find the encouragement that you need by joining a support group. By connecting with others who experience chronic pain and who understand what you are experiencing, you may feel less alone. Remember that asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Take the proactive approach. Physical therapy can be an important aspect of pain management. A physical therapist moves your body to help relax your muscles. You also may learn exercises to do while at home.

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.

Tips for Patients are available for download at www.neurologyreviews.com.

