

Factors that INCREASE the experience of pain^{1,2}

Factor	Influence on pain experience	Factor	Influence on pain experience
Stress (e.g. family, social, work)	! 🚫	Unlimited activity (overactivity)	!
Fear and worry	! 🚫	Pain expectations not being fulfilled (e.g. if a patient expects to recover from neck pain in 4 weeks and this does not occur)	!
Anxiety	! 🚫	Beliefs that set the stage for activity restrictions (e.g. "hurt is harm", "pain is a signal to stop what you are doing", "rest is the best medicine")	! 🚫 🚫
Depression or depressed mood (does not fulfill the diagnostic criteria for depression)	! 🚫	Poor eating habits	!
Catastrophizing (exaggerated negative reaction where the worst possible outcome is imagined)	!	Smoking	!
Negative thoughts and beliefs	! 🚫	Inadequate sleep	!
Avoidance behaviour	! 🚫		

Factors that DECREASE the experience of pain^{1,2}

Factor	Influence on pain experience	Factor	Influence on pain experience
Positive emotions	!	Good eating habits	!
Coping strategies (e.g. relaxation, visualization), pain management skills and education	!	Appropriate levels of activity (moderate activity)	!
Stress reduction	!	Social support	! 🧑
Adequate sleep	!	Distraction	!

Legend

! Increase in pain intensity

! 🧑 Increase in psychological distress

! Decrease in pain intensity

! 🧑 Decrease in psychological distress

! 🚫 Increase in pain disability

! 🚫 Increase in avoidance behaviour

! 🧑 Decrease in psychological distress

! 🚫 Decrease in avoidance behaviour

References

- [1] Gatchel RJ, Howard KJ. The biopsychosocial approach. Practical Pain Management 2015. Available from: <https://www.practicalpainmanagement.com/treatments/psychological/biopsychosocial-approach>
- [2] Linton SJ, Shaw WS. Impact of psychological factors in the experience of pain. Physical Therapy 2011; 91(5):700-711.