

Getting back on the road of life

It can be helpful to think of chronic pain as a car with four flat tires.¹

We may be looking for a single treatment, like medication, to manage pain, but this would be like putting air in only one tire.

You need to fill the other three tires to get where you want to go. There are lots of different ways to fill up the tires. Most of these involve taking an active role in your treatment. Keep your goals in mind so you know what you are working towards.



Psychological therapy²

- Cognitive-behaviour therapy (CBT)
- Mindfulness based interventions
- Acceptance and commitment therapy
- Respondent behavioural therapies (e.g. biofeedback, progressive relaxation)

Instructions:

Preventative treatments and self-management^{2, 6}

- Self-management programs
- [Pacing household chores and activities](#)
- Ergonomic set-up at home and work
- Healthy sleep patterns
- Healthy eating

Instructions:

Physical interventions

Physical therapy (passive)²

- Manual therapy (e.g. physiotherapy, massage, joint manipulation)
- Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS)
- Low level laser therapy
- Heat/cold

Instructions (e.g. frequency and duration):

Physical activity (active)²

Movement is good medicine for chronic pain. Every little bit helps – you can start with as little as 5 minutes every other day!^{3, 4} Mid-morning or early afternoon may be the best times for activity.⁵

- [Aerobic exercise \(e.g. walking\)](#)
- [Strengthening exercise \(e.g. lifting weights\)](#)
- Core stabilizing exercises (e.g. pilates)
- Tai Chi
- Yoga
- Therapeutic aquatic exercise

Instructions (e.g. frequency and duration):

Medication^{2, 6}

- Ask your doctor which medications match your type of pain.
- Ask which side effects to expect and how to manage them.
- Find out how to take the medication properly and for how long you will need to take it.
- Ask how much you can expect the medication to help with your pain and function.
- Follow any instructions on safe use, storage and disposal.
- Do not share medications with others. What is safe for you may be dangerous for someone else.
- Over the counter medication(s): _____

Instructions:

SMART goals (specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic, timed):

References

References:

1. Cowan P. Driving with 4 flat tires. American Chronic Pain Association. Available from: http://www.theacpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/chronicle_fall08_ONLINE.pdf.
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