

Take Charge of Your Pain Program: Patient Booklet



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About This Booklet

Your physical therapist will help you learn ways that you can control your pain. This booklet will remind you of these strategies.

There are places to write down plans and activities.

Your therapist will review this booklet with you, so keep it handy!

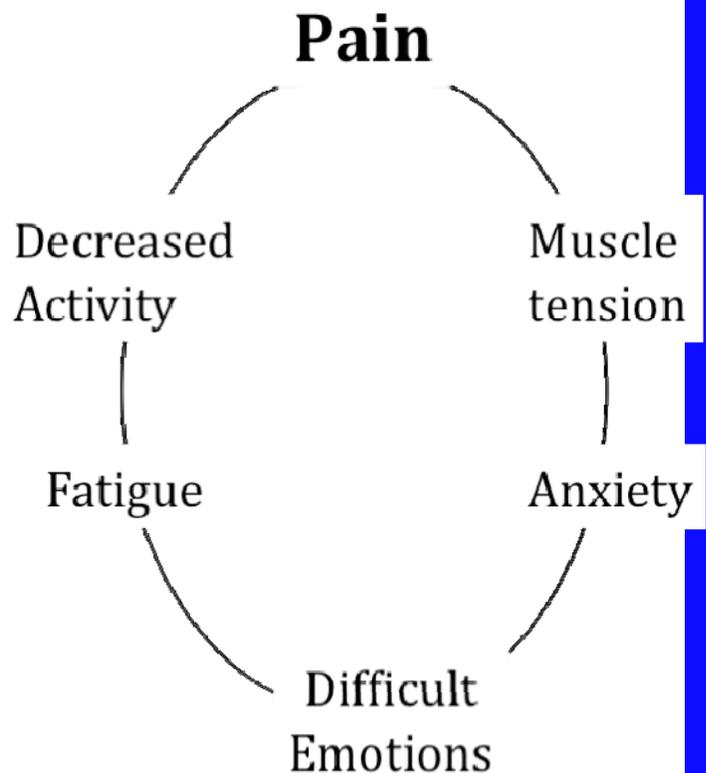
Your friends and family may be interested in this program. You can show them this booklet. This will help them know what you are doing to help with your pain.

Things to Know About Pain

- The way you think about pain affects how it makes you feel.
- Some types of pain may never go away completely. It is up to *you* to learn how to manage it.
- There will be good days and bad days. Your therapist will help you learn ways to make bad days better.
- What you do about your pain may be more helpful than what other people do to you or for you.

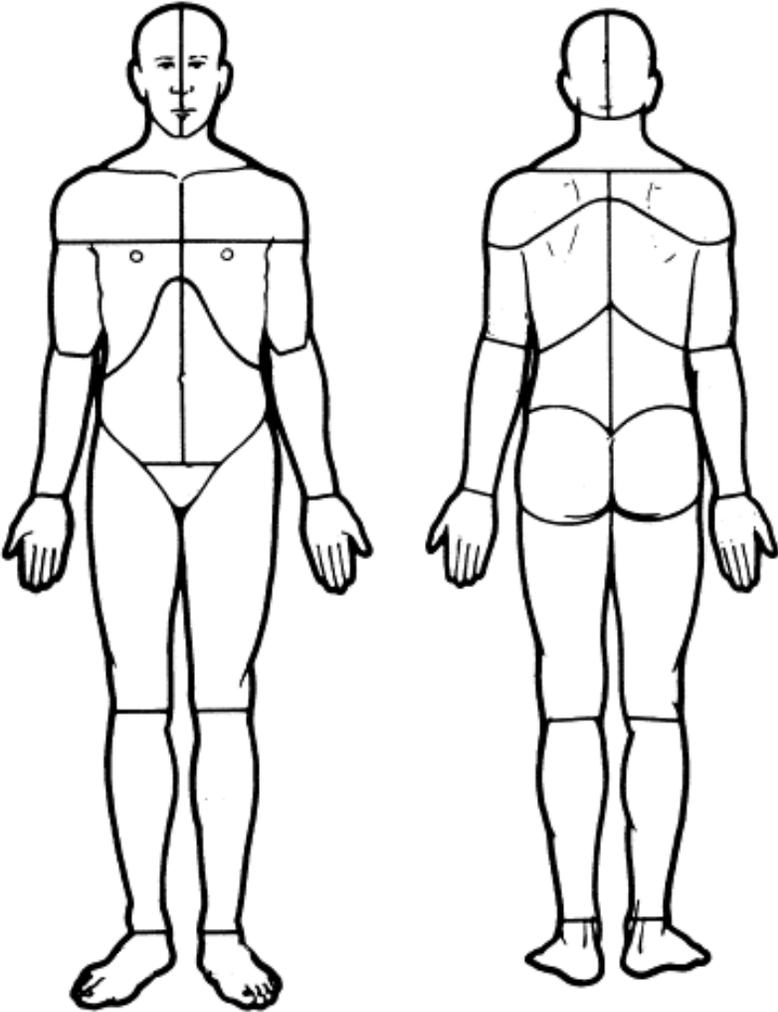
The Pain Cycle

When we have pain the body's natural reaction is to tense up. We might also feel anxious and wonder whether the pain will ever go away. We might feel sad, angry, and tired too. Pain can make us stop moving and doing social activities, but this can make things worse. It is important to break this pain cycle, so that you can get back to a higher level of function.



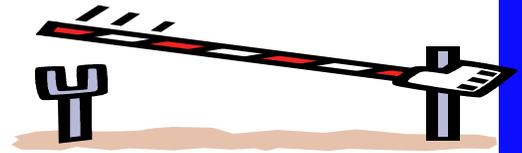
Pain Location

Mark on the diagram where you feel pain. This will help your therapist understand your pain better. Your therapist will talk to you about how different parts of your body are involved in pain.



Pain Gate

Think of pain as a message that goes through a gate.



The gate is opened by things like stress, injury, and loneliness. You feel more pain when the gate is open.

Other things close the gate. A good laugh, relaxing, or talking with friends close the gate and decrease pain.

	Things that Open the Gate (increase pain)	Things that Close the Gate (decrease pain)
Physical	Physical injuries, bad positions	Massage, hot or cold packs, medication, exercise
Psychological	Stress, thinking about the pain, anxiety, depression	Relaxation, positive mood, distraction from pain
Social	Loneliness, criticism from others, arguments	A visit with a friend, a happy phone call.

This program will teach you ways to close the pain gate. It may not close completely, but you will learn ways to control your pain.

The goal is for you to do the things you enjoy and live a more comfortable, active life.

Becoming More Active

Often people who have pain stop doing things when they become ill or injured. Maybe it hurts to move, so you stop moving. Or it may be that you feel too tired to move, so you stop doing things. Sadness and stress also cause some people to avoid any type of activity. It may sound strange, but doing nothing is very bad for your body. Boredom sets in, sadness increases, muscles get weaker, and the mind stops working well. You can break this pattern by planning activities and then *doing* them.

To begin, think about the things that you would like to do. **Go to the “Things I Would Like to Do” worksheet on page 30 and write these ideas down.**

The next step in becoming more active is to keep track of how you spend your time. Then you can make plans for doing more. Using a daily planner helps. **Go to the “Daily Activity Planner” on page 20 and work with your therapist to jot down the activities that you do in a typical day.**

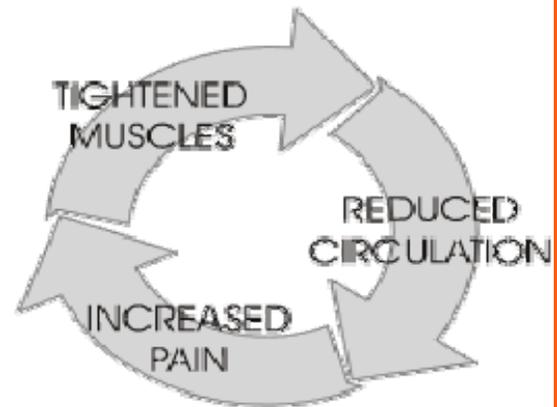
NOTE. If you cannot write due to pain or any other reason, please let your therapist know. Your therapist will work with you to identify someone to help you with this or on another way to keep track of your activities.

Relaxation

It is very easy to let the pain become the focus of all of your thoughts. But the more often you think about pain, the more intense it can become. It “opens the gate” to more pain. Relaxation helps to “close the gate”.

Learning to relax takes practice, but it is worth it! When you are able to relax your mind and your body, you will feel more energy and be able to work toward your goals.

Relaxation also has an impact on how much pain you feel. When you have pain, it is natural for your body to tighten up. When muscles are tightened there is decreased blood flow to the area, and this causes increased pain. This is called the pain spasm cycle. Breaking this cycle with relaxation helps to reduce pain.



Relaxation is much different from sleeping. You will learn several ways to relax, beginning with deep breathing.

Deep Breathing

Wear comfortable clothes, and sit in a comfortable position. Both feet should rest on the floor.

Place one hand on your stomach and the other on your chest. Feel your hands rise and fall with each breath. Pay attention to which hand moves the most.

With each breath, gently draw more air down toward your stomach. *Do not force this.* When your breathing is mostly low near your stomach, rest your hands at your sides.

Next, focus on the timing of your breathing. Breathe in for 3 counts and then exhale for 3 counts.

Do not hold your breath or force the air out. Try to INHALE 1...2...3, EXHALE 1...2...3.

Breathe gently and deeply.

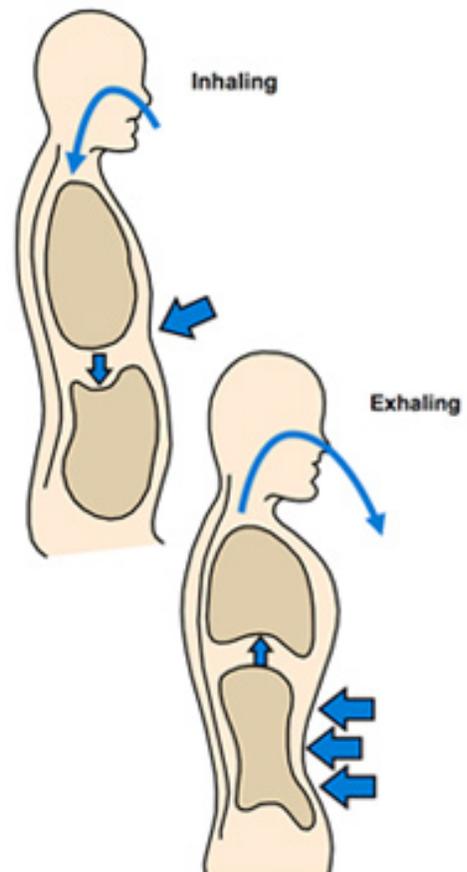
As you breathe, think the following thoughts:

With each breath, I am becoming more and more relaxed.

My body feels heavy and warm.

It feels very good to be relaxed.

Continue to breathe deeply and relax for 5 – 10 minutes.



Imagery

Imagery uses your mind to create a very pleasant scene. This helps you relax and takes your thoughts away from the pain.

First, get in a comfortable position with your body well-supported. Focus on deep breathing to begin to relax.

Next, close your eyes and imagine a place that is very pleasant. It may be a beach, or a beautiful garden. It may be a place and time when you felt very relaxed and happy. Focus on the details. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell? What do you feel? Allow full relaxation as you imagine this scene. After a few minutes, open your eyes and slowly move around. Enjoy the happy feeling.



Pleasant Activity Scheduling

Sometimes people who have pain stop doing fun activities. Maybe it is more painful than fun now. Some people avoid social events completely.

The lack of fun activities can make anyone feel sad or depressed. This makes the pain even worse. It is important to do ***pleasant activities*** each week. This gives you something to look forward to. You will be more active too.



Begin by thinking of activities that you enjoy. Here are some ideas to get you started. Circle the activities you like to do, and **make a plan to do them**. Make sure some of your choices are *active*!

Playing cards
Listening to music
Spending time with friends
Watching sports
Cooking or Baking
Dancing
Playing board games
Fixing things
Writing
Playing a musical instrument
Shopping
Playing with animals
Going for a walk
Watching children play
Singing
Going to a party

Joining a club
Doing arts and crafts
Solving puzzles
Dressing up
Calling a friend
Having visitors
Going to the library
Going out to eat with friends
Taking photographs
Painting

Activity Pacing

Often when we want to do a task we keep doing it until it is finished. We get so focused on finishing that we keep working and cause pain to flare up. Once the pain starts, it is hard to get it back under control. **Activity pacing** means stopping BEFORE the pain increases. This means that it will take more time to complete activities but you will have less pain.



Planning Activity Pacing



1. Think of a task that you would like to do, but it causes pain.
Example: standing at the kitchen sink to wash the dishes.
2. Try to guess how long you can do that activity before the pain starts up.
Example: after about 10 minutes my back starts to hurt.
3. Cut that time in half, and make a plan to do this activity for only that period of time. Use your daily activity planner sheets!
Example: Stand while washing the dishes for 5 minutes, then sit to finish the job.
4. Do your activity, and stop when you planned to stop. DON'T keep going. It is important to stop before the pain begins.
5. Think about how this went. Are there any ways you need to change the activity?
6. Plan to do it again, maybe adding a little more time to the activity. But remember to stop *before* you hurt.

Some Tips To Help You Along

- Pay careful attention to how you do your activities. Good body movements reduce the stress on your body.
- Do not rush!
- Spread your activities out over the week. Do not try to do all of them in only one or two days.
- Decide what is most important and do only those things. Remember to do something fun too!
- Pace your activities even when you are not in pain. This will help you avoid pain flare-ups.

Muscle Relaxation

Muscle relaxation is another tool to help you relax. This time you will focus specifically on groups of muscles. First you will tighten up the muscles and focus on how the tightness feels. Then you will relax, and enjoy that sensation.

How to use Muscle Relaxation

- Sit in a comfortable chair that supports you well
- Use deep breathing to start to relax
- Close your eyes

Begin with your feet. Pull your toes up and hold for a few seconds. Pay attention to the feeling of tension. Then relax completely. How do your muscles feel when they are relaxed? They will start to feel heavy, warm, and comfortable.

Now, move up to the muscles around your knees. Straighten your knees and feel the tension in your thighs. Hold it. Then relax completely. Focus on the warm, heavy sensation of relaxation.

Work your way up your body by first tightening muscles, and then relaxing them. Do not worry if you forget the order of muscle groups. The important thing is to tense up the muscles, feel the tightness, and then relax the muscles.

How do I know which muscles to work on?

- Feet/calves – pull toes up.
- Knees/thighs – straighten your knees completely.
- Gluteals – tighten the muscles in your buttocks.
- Shoulders – shrug your shoulders up to your ears.
- Arms – straighten your arms out completely.
- Hands/wrists – clench your hands into fists.
- Face – tighten your jaw muscles. Wrinkle your nose.

Mentally go over your body. If a muscle feels tight, contract it more, and then relax it completely. Take a few more deep breaths, and focus on how good it feels to be relaxed. When you are ready, slowly move your feet, legs, and arms. Open your eyes. Ahhh!



Sleep Tips

Sleep is important to your health. Many parts of your body are active during sleep. They repair damaged tissues and decrease stress. We all need good sleep, but getting enough can be difficult.



Tips For Better Nighttime Sleep

- Do not nap during the day. Instead relax or meditate. If you must nap, sleep early in the day for less than 30 minutes.
- Avoid caffeinated or alcoholic beverages for a few hours before going to bed at night.
- Expose yourself to bright light/sunlight as soon as you wake up. This helps adjust your body's natural biological clock.
- Exercise early in the day. Exercise stimulates the body. But doing this right before bedtime may make falling asleep more difficult.
- Keep your bedroom dark, peaceful, and comfortable. Make sure your room is set at a comfortable temperature. Use a fan or "white noise" machine to help block outside noises.
- Hide your clock. A big, bright clock might make you feel stressed and anxious if you are focused on the time.

Tips For A Better Pre-Sleep Ritual

- Keep a regular schedule. Try to wake up and go to bed at the same time every day, even on the weekends.
- Do not eat a large, heavy meal before bed. This can cause indigestion and interfere with sleep. Try to eat dinner at least two hours before going to bed.
- Write down all of your concerns before going to bed. Anxiety excites the nervous system and makes you more alert.



Tips For Getting *Back* To Sleep

- Try visual imagery. Imagine walking down an endless stairwell, or try counting sheep! Thinking of boring things helps your brain slow down and go to sleep.
- If you do not get back to sleep quickly, get out of bed. Go into another room and do something relaxing until you feel sleepy. Worrying about falling asleep can keep people awake.

- Do not do anything stimulating. Do not watch a television program or use a computer.
- Do not expose yourself to bright light. The light gives cues to your brain that it is time to wake up.
- Change your bedtime by going to bed later. This way, the time you spend in bed is spent sleeping. This will help train your body to sleep while in bed.

Dealing with Pain Flare-Ups



A pain flare-up is when the pain goes above the usual level for longer than one day. This can happen for many reasons, but it is sometimes hard to figure out why your pain increased. If your pain flares up – do not panic! Remember the tools you have learned to control the pain.

1. Use ice or cold pack over the painful area for the first day or two after an injury. Switch to heat as pain lessens. Apply heat or cold for only 20 minutes at a time. Repeat every hour, as needed.
 2. Use pain medications as your doctor prescribes them. Stay on a regular schedule to prevent the pain from getting too severe.
 3. Avoid too much bed rest. Getting up and moving is good for your body and mind. If you must spend long periods in bed, do some exercises to keep your joints moving. This will also keep your strength up.
1. Use relaxation and focus on things other than pain. You can practice deep breathing, imagine a pleasant image, or do muscle relaxation exercises.
 2. Gradually add more activities to get back into your normal routine.



Daily Activity Planner

The first time you fill in the daily planner, your therapist will work with you to jot down your activities in a typical day. It doesn't take much time to jot down a few things to keep track of how you spend your day. You should also plan ahead to do things, so that you don't get stuck in the routine and lose track of the things you enjoy doing.

As you go through the program, you will take control of writing down the activities you want to do each day. These activities usually will include:

- **The exercises your therapist assigns**
- **A pleasant activity**
- **A time to relax**

You do not need to use one of the pages at the back of the Patient Booklet. You can use a blank piece of paper. **It is important to keep your list of activities with the Booklet so you can review it with your therapist.**

DAILY ACTIVITY PLANNER

Date: _____

Time	Activity	Comments
7:00		
8:00		
9:00		
10:00		
11:00		
Noon		
1:00		
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11:00		
Midnight		

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Midnight		

Things I Would Like to Do

Think about the things that you would like to get back to doing.

Write these down in the space below. Ask a family member or caregiver to help you. Then add in things that you would like to start doing that are new to you. You can add an activity to your daily planner when you are ready. Over time, you should be able to check off things that you have been able to do. This list will help inspire you.
