

A photograph of an elderly person with short, grey hair lying on their stomach on a bed. Their hands are clasped together under their chin, supporting their head. They are wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt. The background is a bright window with white frames, showing a blurred outdoor scene. The overall mood is one of quiet contemplation or discomfort.

Ease Your Pain
A GUIDE TO FEELING BETTER



Start Today

You are not alone.

You can take
charge and
ease your pain.

Use this guide
to begin making
small changes
that will make
a big difference
in how *you* feel.

There Is Help For Your Pain

Don't suffer in silence or blame yourself. Tell your doctor about your pain. Let your doctor help you understand why you have pain and give you effective ways to help.

This pamphlet gives seven practical ways that patients and healthcare providers have found helpful for pain management. Pain is different for everyone. There are many things that you can do to help ease your pain. Find out what combination works best for you.

Keep working with your doctor and asking questions until you are satisfied.

You are the one who will benefit.

REMEMBER

Pain relief is a process that takes time.



Lowering Your Stress Eases Pain

- ❖ One of the best ways to relax is to pay attention to your breathing. Shallow breathing makes you anxious; deep breathing helps you relax.
 - ❖ Imagine yourself in a peaceful place. Relaxation tapes or CDs can help you create calm, peaceful images in your mind.
 - ❖ Listen to music that relaxes you. Get a tape of nature sounds like rain or the ocean. Slow instrumental music without words can also help you relax.
 - ❖ Let the day's distractions go. Clear your mind. Focus on relaxing your muscles.
- What calms you down?
What helps you relax
and brings you peace?
Doing calming activities
throughout the day helps
lower anxiety and pain. It
improves sleep, strengthens
your immune system, and
helps you heal.*

TIPS

- ❖ Sit in a dimly lit room and close your eyes.
- ❖ Focus on slowing your breathing.
- ❖ Breathe in deeply and then breathe out slowly.
- ❖ When your mind wanders, bring it back to your breathing.
- ❖ Visualize breathing out pain.



The Benefits of Positive Thoughts

- ❖ Pain can be lessened by a positive attitude.
- ❖ You are in charge of your thinking and your attitude.
- ❖ Focus on what is good in your life.

If you have trouble thinking positive thoughts and feel tired, sad, irritable, or have trouble sleeping, ask your doctor about depression. It is common to be depressed with chronic pain.

TIPS

- ❖ Watch movies that make you feel good.
- ❖ Spend time with people who lift your spirits.
- ❖ Listen to music that makes you happy.

Learning to sleep well is a process. It may take three weeks to three months to reset your pattern.

Ways To Sleep Better

Sleep naturally makes your body stronger. Getting enough sleep may give you a sense of well-being and help you feel better.

- ❖ Do not drink coffee, tea, or other drinks with caffeine or eat chocolate after 6 p.m.
- ❖ Sleep in a quiet, dark, cool room.
- ❖ Go to bed at the same time and get out of bed at the same time every day.
- ❖ Do not watch TV late or in bed.
- ❖ If you wake up during the night, use this peaceful time to relax or focus on your breathing.

TIPS

- ❖ Create a calm sleeping environment.
- ❖ Take a warm bath.
- ❖ Drink something soothing, like chamomile tea.
- ❖ Listen to relaxing music that soothes you.
- ❖ Rock in a rocking chair.



Moving Helps

One of the main reasons to move more is to break up tension and help your body relax and heal. Moving more can help you have more energy and feel upbeat.

START SLOWLY

- ❖ One good way to start is in your bathtub. Gently stretch in warm water. Warm water can ease pain.
- ❖ When you're ready to do more, do something simple and short. Start with a 10-minute walk.
- ❖ Get a beginner's video or DVD on stretching.

[TIP] Pace yourself. Sometimes people may overdo it when they are feeling better.

Some people who have trouble walking find it helpful to stretch and move in a swimming pool.

[TIP] Call the YMCA, YWCA, or a wellness center and ask about water exercise.

Some people can't move a lot. Physical therapy may help. Ask your doctor.



Food For Health

Healthy eating helps you feel better and have more energy.

Obesity can make pain worse. The more weight you carry, the harder it is on your body.

Fresh or frozen foods are better for you than canned foods.

Drinking water helps cleanse your system.

Look in your grocery store for a variety of teas.

- ❖ Green and white teas give energy.
- ❖ Chamomile tea may help you relax.
- ❖ Ginger tea may help reduce pain and nausea.

A dietician at your local hospital or wellness center can help personalize a program for you.



Take Care of Yourself

Do the things you need to do to have a healthy body, mind, and spirit.

- ❖ Get outside in the fresh air.
- ❖ Do something you enjoy – gardening, painting, puzzles, or crafts.
- ❖ Find a group for support. This may be your family, friends, school, church, or any group you feel comfortable with.

If you smoke, stop smoking. Ask your doctor for help to quit. There is no one way that works for everyone.

REMEMBER, healing is a process.



Medicine Can Help

Both generic and brand-name drugs can help control pain quickly and effectively. Tell your doctor all of the prescription and over-the-counter medicines you are taking and what you are allergic to.

BE SURE YOU UNDERSTAND:

- ❖ If your pain medicine is safe to take with your other medicines
- ❖ Only take your own medicine
- ❖ When to take your medicine

Pain medicine should be taken before your pain gets too bad.

YOU ARE IN CHARGE:

Tell your doctor if your medicine does not work or causes side effects. If you feel your medicine is too strong, talk to your doctor.

Other Things May Be Helpful

ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT:

- ❖ Heat & Cold Therapy
- ❖ Massage Therapy
- ❖ Patches & Salves
- ❖ Acupuncture & Acupressure
- ❖ Biofeedback
- ❖ Hypnosis
- ❖ TENS Unit Therapy
- ❖ Tai Chi
- ❖ Chiropractic

This brochure is not intended to offer medical advice.
Please see your doctor if you have issues with pain.

The future holds many possibilities. Stay informed. You can take charge and ease your pain. You are not alone.

Start today. Use this guide to begin making small changes that will make a big difference in how you feel.

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