

Managing pain

Hurt vs. harm

Pain is our body's way of telling us something needs our attention. But sometimes, pain persists long after our body has healed.

Even though the pain is very real, there may be no risk that you'll harm your body by becoming more active. In fact, if you avoid being active, you could harm your physical condition and end up causing more pain.

Here are some ways you can deal with persistent pain.

Shift the focus

Instead of waiting for pain to go away before becoming more active, gradually increase activities. You may feel pain as you start being active again and it's normal as you rebuild your strength. Over time, you'll be able to do more with less pain.

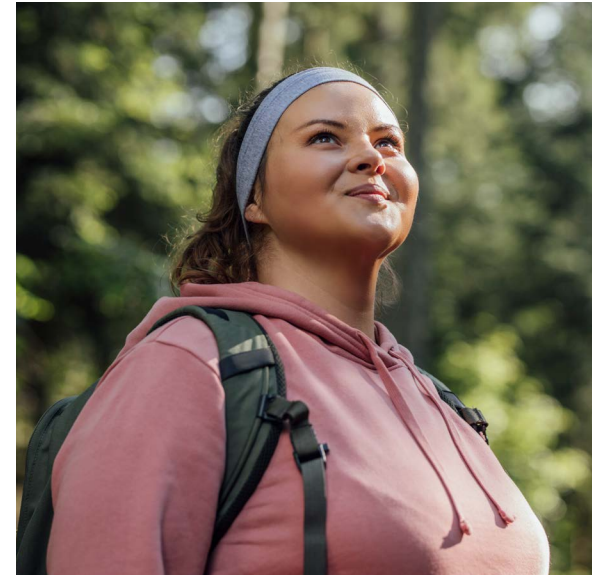
Set achievable goals

Set goals for things you want to be able to do. Things like walking a certain number of minutes or steps per day, going to the park or attending a dinner party. Gradually add activities you previously enjoyed. You may be slower than before, but you can be proud of what you're able to achieve. And if you have a bad day, that's OK. We all do.

Build a plan

Think about what you're able to do now, what you want to do next, and the steps you can take to get there. Choose what you think you can do this week and next week. Give yourself some time to reach your goals.

You may need help from a health care professional like a physiotherapist or a kinesiologist to build a progression plan that works for you.



For a short video on this topic, click [here](#) or use this link: canadalife.com/video-pain

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Control your stress level

Stress increases your pain. Try mindfulness and other meditation techniques. There are lots of meditation videos and apps. Try the calming techniques available through the [Workplace Strategies for Mental Health website](#).

Talk to your health care provider. They'll help determine the cause of your pain and they can suggest treatment options. They can also tell you what activities you can safely do.

If you feel down or discouraged because your progress is slow, contact your health care provider or your employee assistance program for support to maintain your mental well-being.

Your pain may never go away completely, and you may never find a cure. As you learn how to manage pain and the difference between hurt vs. harm, you can have a satisfying lifestyle.

You don't have to let pain defeat you!



Activity log

Use this to track your activities. Share it with your health care provider to discuss your progress.

Instructions

- You can print the activity log and fill in a paper copy.
- To fill electronically, save a copy on your computer. Use the Tab key to navigate from one cell to another.

For long-term goals, write things you want to be able to do in the future but can't do now. Here are some examples:

- Going on a one-hour hike or bike ride
- Going grocery shopping by yourself
- Inviting friends for dinner and cooking for them
- Going back to work full time

For goals for this week, think of what you're able to do now. Choose one or more goals for this week that will help you attain your long-term goals.

Some examples may be:

- Going on a 15-minute walk three times this week
- Going to the store for short errands twice this week
- Playing games with the dog for 30 minutes each day
- Preparing vegetables for dinner every day

Under each day, list the activities you completed in the morning, afternoon and evening. Use the comments section to write about how you felt, what helped or what got in the way.



Activity log

Date _____

Long-term goals _____

Goals for this week _____

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
A.M.							
P.M.							
Evening							
Comments about the day							

Activity log

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