

The Wellness Express™



Jump on the train to good health

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The Many Facets of Pain

Presented by:

For most of us, pain is one of those things in life that we do our best to avoid, get rid of, or try to ignore. Why wouldn't we? It hurts!

But did you know that pain can be considered a great blessing?

Without pain, you could never learn from experience how detrimental certain things in the environment can be to your health. Without pain, you may otherwise continue down a path that puts you directly in harm's way. Without pain, and its contrast to joy, how could we ever really know what makes us feel good?

Pain is popular subject these days. A recent issue of a national news magazine was entirely devoted to the subject. Topics discussed included chronic pain, referred pain, intractable pain, and traditional and alternative methods used to treat it.¹ The bottom line: there are a lot of different types of pain, and many different ways to alleviate it.

Pain classifications include:

- **Acute pain** – immediate onset of pain caused by physical trauma and resulting inflammation. The pain is usually sharp and intense. Intermittent ice and rest are recommended for at least 72 hours.

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- **Chronic pain** – pain that lasts longer than the naturally expected healing time for an acute injury. The character of the pain can be sharp, dull, burning or aching. Consulting a health care professional is always the best idea in this case.

- **Referred pain** – pain that is felt in an area of the body that is not injured. Chiropractors can help identify this type of pain in patients.

- **Psychosomatic pain** – pain that is felt in the physical body, with origins in mentally or emotionally charged events. Therapists trained in mind-body specialties are recommended here.

But what really causes pain?

Scientists and medical experts once defined pain as a nociceptive response – which is your body's reaction to a stimulus based on the activation of nerve endings called nociceptors, and the transmission of this information to your brain, where pain is then felt. However, based on a number of more recent advances in pain research and observation, the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) has created a more updated definition.²

Exercise of the Week

Low Back Stabilization with Alternating Arms/Legs Extension

Difficulty: Moderate to Advanced
(Consult your chiropractor before starting this or any other exercise.)

Start: Lie on back with arms relaxed overhead. Position exercise ball between ankles so it can be lifted off floor. Keep legs bent to approximately 90 degrees.

Exercise: Holding ball between ankles, bring knees toward chest. Reach for ball and take into hands. Return arms and legs back to starting position. Perform same movement, this time returning ball between legs. Return to starting position.

Repeat 10-15 times.



“An unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage, or described in terms of such damage.”

This definition is particularly interesting because it includes the phrases *sensory and emotional experience* and *actual or potential tissue damage*. This updated meaning reflects the emotional component of pain. The main point is: If you expect to feel pain in any given situation, most often you *will* feel the pain - even when actual tissue damage does not occur. Personal experiences, cultural differences, and degrees of fear and anxiety all influence the sensation of pain.

What will you do when YOU have pain? You may try a number of different things until you find the right choice for you.

More of us are seeking natural methods to deal with pain and disease. According to a survey conducted by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM), as early as 1997, more people were making visits to their alternative therapists than to their traditional medical doctors.³

Based on information obtained from yet another survey conducted by the NCCAM, the use of alternative therapies is shifting its focus to the use of mind-body techniques like relaxation breathing and meditation.⁴

Chiropractors have been helping their patients deal with pain for over 100 years. The number one reason patients seek chiropractic help is to reduce the level of their pain. And according to a summary article written for the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (based on the NCCAM data), more people seek a chiropractor to help with their back pain, neck pain, arthritis and sprains than most other alternative healing therapies.³ Chiropractors know how to identify the cause of your pain. By treating the spinal subluxation, chiropractors also enhance the body's natural ability to heal on its own. They restore proper alignment and nervous system function, which optimizes mind-body communication.



Your chiropractor knows pain. Let your chiropractor help you feel better.

Quote to Inspire

“Pain is deeper than all thought; laughter is higher than all pain.”

- Elbert Hubbard

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1. Understanding Pain - *Time*, 177(9): March 7, 2011.
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3. Trends in Alternative Medicine Use in the United States, 1990-1997: Results of a Follow-up National Survey - *JAMA*. 1998; 280: 1569-1575.
4. Complementary and Alternative Medicine Use Among Adults and Children: United States, 2007 - *CDC National Health Statistics Report #12*.

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