



Living Well with Chronic Pain: Strategies for Daily Life

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What is chronic pain?

- Pain lasting for more than 3-6 months
- It affects millions worldwide
- Can be caused by various factors, including arthritis, nerve damage, fibromyalgia and others

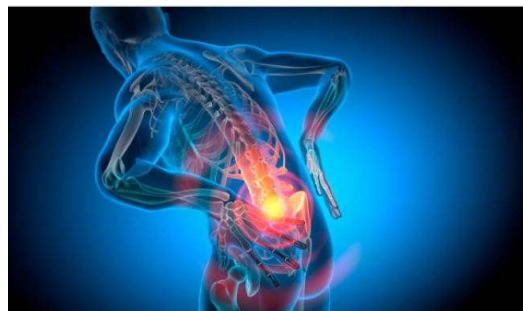


Fig 1. Low back pain <https://www.istockphoto.com/photos/low-back-pain?page=2>

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You or someone you know is likely to experience chronic pain...

#1

Reason
Americans
access the health
care system

83%

Adults people
with high-impact
chronic pain who
are unable to
work

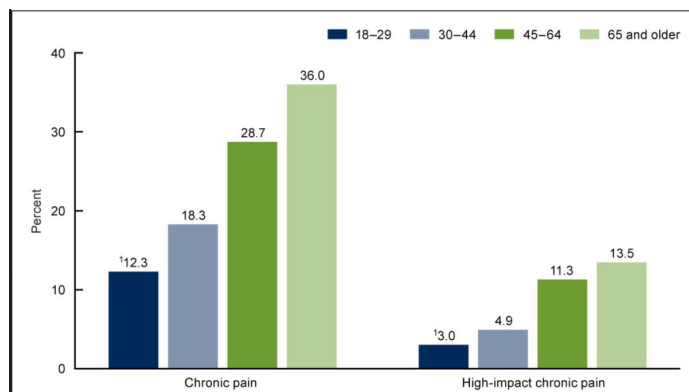
51.6 million

An estimated 21% of
the population live
with chronic pain

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Fig 2. Percentage of adults age 18 and older with chronic pain and high-impact chronic pain in the past 3 months, by age group: United States, 2023



*Significant linear trend by age group ($p < 0.05$).

NOTES: Chronic pain is based on responses of "most days" or "every day" to the survey question, "In the past 3 months, how often did you have pain? Would you say never, some days, most days, or every day?" High-impact chronic pain is defined as adults who have chronic pain and who responded "most days" or "every day" to the survey question, "Over the past 3 months, how often did your pain limit your life or work activities? Would you say never, some days, most days, or every day?" Estimates are based on household interviews of a sample of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population.

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Chronic pain can impact life in many way including.....

- Work, relationships, hobbies
- It can lead to inactivity, fatigue, and sleep problems
- Often associated with sadness, stress, and anxiety

While anyone can develop chronic pain, there are specific risk factors.

Demographic

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity and cultural background
- Socio-economic background
- Employment status and occupational factors

Lifestyle and Behavior

- Smoking
- Alcohol
- Physical activity
- Nutrition
- Sunshine and Vitamin D

Clinical

- Pain
- Multi-morbidity and mortality
- Mental health
- Surgical and medical interventions
- Weight
- Sleep disorders
- Genetics

Other

- History of violent injury, abuse or interpersonal violence
- Attitudes and beliefs about pain

Myth: Pain and emotions are not linked

Fact: Stress and negative emotions can worsen pain perception

Mind-Body Connection

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Identify and change negative thought patterns as well as behaviors related to pain

- Improved physical function
- Enhanced quality of life
- Reduced pain intensity
- Decreased daily opioid dosages


[Home](#) | [JAMA Network Open](#) | Vol. 8, No. 4

Original Investigation | Complementary and Alternative Medicine

Mindfulness vs Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Chronic Low Back Pain Treated With Opioids A Randomized Clinical Trial

Aleksandra E. Zgierska, MD, PhD^{1,2,3}; Robert R. Edwards, PhD^{4,5}; Bruce Barrett, MD, PhD⁶; et al

Mind-Body Connection cont.....

► N Am J Med Sci. 2011 Jan;3(1):20–23. doi: [10.4297/najms.2011.320](https://doi.org/10.4297/najms.2011.320) 

Mindfulness-based stress reduction: a non-pharmacological approach for chronic illnesses

[Asfandiyar Khan Niazi](#) ^{1,✉}, [Shaharyar Khan Niazi](#) ²

Mindfulness and Meditation

- Can increase distress tolerance
- Reduce pain perception and anxiety
- 4 sessions of mindfulness meditation - reduced pain intensity by 40% and pain unpleasantness by 57% during experimentally induced pain

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Myth: Physical movement does not improve pain

Fact: Physical activity can improve several aspects of pain

Movement as Medicine.....

Importance of Physical Activity

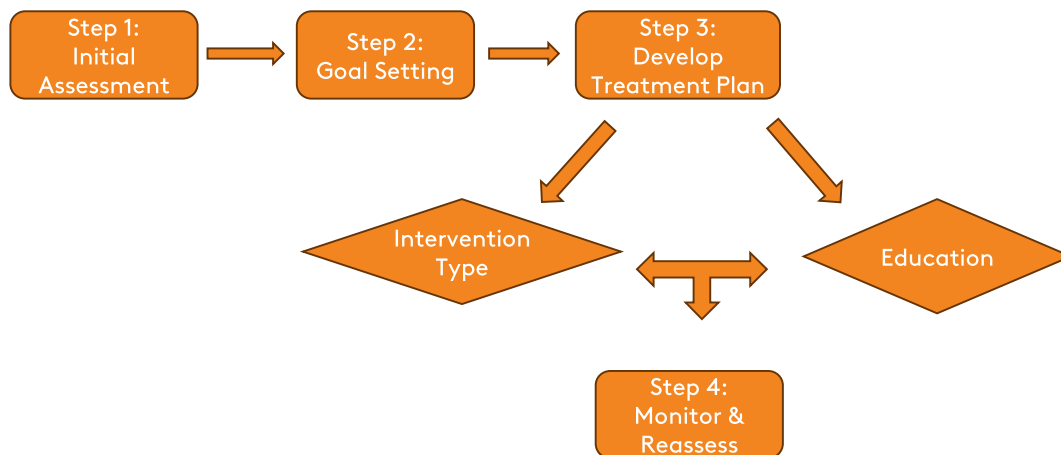
- Improved physical function
- Enhanced quality of life
- Reduced pain intensity
- Decreased daily opioid dosages

Randomized Controlled Trial > J Physiother. 2025 Apr;71(2):108-116.
doi: 10.1016/j.jphys.2025.03.003. Epub 2025 Apr 1.

Group-based exercise reduces pain and disability and improves other outcomes in older people with chronic non-specific low back pain: the ESCAPE randomised trial

Hytalo de Jesus Silva ¹, Júlio Pascoal de Miranda ², Whesley Tanor Silva ³, Leticia Soares Fonseca ²,
Diêgo Mendes Xavier ², Murilo Xavier Oliveira ², Vinicius Cunha Oliveira ²

Physical Therapy Assessment & Intervention



Myth: Nutrition does not affect pain

Fact: A well-balanced nutrition may have a positive effect on pain

A well balanced nutritional approach is key.....

Diet and Inflammation

- Anti-inflammatory diet (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, omega-3-fatty acids)
- Avoid or minimize processed foods, sugary snacks and high-fat foods

Adequate Hydration

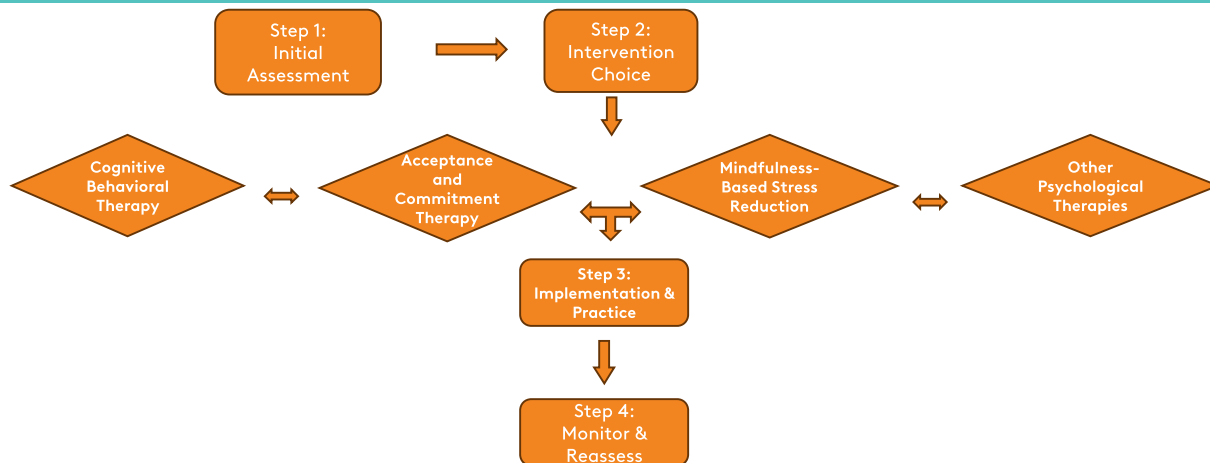
Essential for nutrient absorption and cellular function

Specific Nutrients

Foods rich in Vitamin D, Magnesium and B-vitamins



Stress Management is crucial.....



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Stress Management is crucial.....

Initial Assessment

When: Determined in risk assessment with primary care or pain medicine provider
See: Your pain medicine provider
What: Evaluate pain-related distress, anxiety, depression contributing to pain
Why: Exposes factors contributing to persistent pain despite medical and interventional therapies

Psychological Interventions

When: After referral from primary care or pain medicine providers
See: One of MetroHealth's pain psychologist
Why: Assess, Develop treatment options, Implement and practice psychological rehabilitation treatments to improve pain syndromes

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Treatment: Hope for chronic pain

Many factors go into determining your course of treatment for chronic pain. You may have several different options or combinations, depending on the type of chronic pain. This may include:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Botox • E-stim • Intrathecal implantable devices • Infusion therapy • Myofascial release • Peripheral nerve stimulation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio frequency ablation • Spinal cord stimulation • Spinal spacers • Sympathetic blocks • Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS) |
|--|---|

Multi-disciplinary approach is key

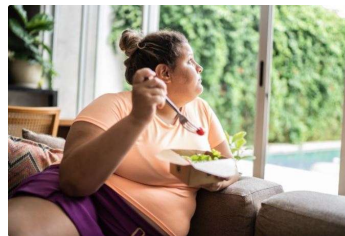
Weight Management

Who: Individuals with obesity (determined in risk assessment with primary care provider)

See: MetroHealth Center medical providers specialized in obesity management

What: Uses weight loss medication (GLP-1s) and other treatments to manage weight

Why: Obesity can cause many serious diseases and affect quality of life as well as pain.



Role of sleep management in chronic pain

50-88%

People with chronic pain
have ongoing sleep
difficulties

Sleep Management

Who: Individuals with sleep disorders (determined in risk assessment with primary care provider)

See: MetroHealth Center medical providers specialized in sleep medicine management

What: Strategies for sleep hygiene, medications, snoring remedies, surgery or use of continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) devices

Why: Poor sleep can have significant impact on overall health, quality of life and pain management.

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Availability matters. Schedule an appointment for evaluation #chronicpain.

Clinical Locations

Call 216-957-4325 to schedule.



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MetroHealth is here to help.

MetroHealth Pain and Healing

216-957-4325



<https://www.metrohealth.org/pain-and-healing-center>

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Commonly Asked Question:

1. When should I seek care medical evaluation for pain?

- Pain is subjective but when quality of life is impacted, then it is best to seek medical evaluation



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