

Pain Management

Deep breathing and meditation help with chronic pain.

Deep breathing and meditation are techniques that help your body relax, which eases pain. Tension and tightness seep from muscles as they receive a quiet message to relax.

The soothing power of repetition is at the heart of some forms of [meditation](#). Focusing on the breath, ignoring thoughts, and repeating a word or phrase -- a mantra -- causes the body to relax. While you can learn meditation on your own, it helps to take a class.

Deep breathing is also a relaxation technique. Find a quiet location, a comfortable body position, and block out distracting thoughts. Then, imagine a spot just below your navel. Breathe into that spot, filling your abdomen with air. Let the air fill you from the abdomen up, then let it out, like deflating a balloon.

Reducing stress in your life reduces chronic pain.

Negative feelings like [depression](#), [anxiety](#), stress, and anger can increase the body's sensitivity to pain. By learning to take control of stress, you may find some relief from chronic pain.

Several techniques can help [reduce stress](#) and promote relaxation. Listening to soothing, calming music can lift your mood -- and make living with chronic pain more bearable. There are even specially designed relaxation tapes or CDs for this. Mental imagery relaxation (also called guided imagery) is a form of mental escape that can help you feel peaceful. It involves creating calming, peaceful images in your mind. Progressive muscle relaxation is another technique that promotes relaxation.

Boost chronic pain relief with the natural endorphins from exercise.

Endorphins are brain chemicals that help improve your mood while also blocking pain signals. Exercise has another pain-reducing effect -- it strengthens muscles, helping prevent re-injury and further pain. Plus, exercise can help keep your weight down, reduce heart disease risk, and control blood sugar levels -- especially important if you have diabetes. Ask your doctor for an exercise routine that is right for you. If you have certain health conditions, like [diabetic neuropathy](#), you will need to be careful about the types of activities you engage in; your doctor can advise you on the best physical activities for you.

Alcohol can worsen sleep problems.

Pain makes sleep difficult, and alcohol can make sleep problems worse. If you're living with chronic pain, drinking less or no alcohol can improve your quality of life.

Gain strength and hope from others living with chronic pain.

When you're with people who have chronic pain and understand what you're going through, you feel less alone. You also benefit from their wisdom in coping with the pain.

Also, consider meeting with a mental health professional. Anyone can develop depression if they're living with chronic pain. Getting counseling can help you learn to cope better and help you avoid negative thoughts that make pain worse -- so you have a healthier attitude. Asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness.