

Alternative Pain Management

These are ways to help with chronic pain that do not include pain medications. Sometimes pain meds no longer work for chronic pain, and these are therapies that may help.

TYPE	WHAT THEY HELP	HOW THEY WORK	EXAMPLES
<p>Movement-Based Therapies:</p> <p>Physical exercises and practices</p>	<p>Musculoskeletal pain, joint pain, and lower-back pain.</p>	<p>By strengthening muscles supporting joints, improving alignment, and releasing endorphins.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Physical therapy: Specialized movements to strengthen weak areas of the body, often through resistance training. ● Yoga: An Indian practice of meditative stretching and posing. ● Pilates: A resistance regimen that strengthens core muscles. ● Tai chi: A slow, flowing Chinese practice that improves balance. ● Feldenkrais: A therapy that builds efficiency of movement.
<p>Nutritional and Herbal Remedies:</p> <p>Food choices and dietary supplements (ask your doc before using supplements)</p>	<p>All chronic pain but especially abdominal discomfort, headaches, and inflammatory conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis.</p>	<p>By boosting the body's natural immunity, reducing pain-causing inflammation, soothing pain, and decreasing insomnia.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Anti-inflammatory diet: A Mediterranean eating pattern high in whole grains, fresh fruits, leafy vegetables, fish, and olive oil. ● Omega-3 fatty acids: Nutrients abundant in fish oil and flaxseed that reduce inflammation in the body. ● Ginger: A root that inhibits pain-causing molecules. ● Turmeric: A spice that reduces inflammation. ● MSM: Methylsulfonylmethane, a naturally occurring nutrient that helps build bone and cartilage.
<p>Mind-Body Medicine:</p> <p>Using the powers of the mind to produce changes in the body</p>	<p>All types of chronic pain.</p>	<p>By reducing stressful (and, hence, pain-inducing) emotions such as panic and fear, and by refocusing attention on subjects other than pain.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meditation: Focusing the mind on something specific (such as breathing or repeating a word or phrase) to quiet it. ● Guided imagery: Visualizing a particular outcome or scenario with the goal of mentally changing one's physical reality. ● Biofeedback: With a special machine, becoming alert to body processes, such as muscle tightening, to learn to control them. ● Relaxation: Releasing tension in the body through exercises such as controlled breathing.

<p>Energy Healing:</p> <p>Manipulating the electrical energy - called chi in Chinese medicine - emitted by the body's nervous system</p>	<p>Pain that lingers after an injury heals, as well as pain complicated by trauma, anxiety, or depression.</p>	<p>By relaxing the body and the mind, distracting the nervous system, producing natural painkillers, activating natural pleasure centers, and manipulating chi.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acupuncture: The insertion of hair-thin needles into points along the body's meridians, or energetic pathways, to stimulate the flow of energy throughout the body; proven helpful for post-surgical pain and dental pain, among other types. ● Acupressure: Finger pressure applied to points along the meridians, to balance and increase the flow of energy. ● Chi gong: Very slow, gentle physical movements, similar to tai chi, that cleanse the body and circulate chi. ● Reiki: Moving a practitioner's hands over the energy fields of the client's body to increase energy flow and restore balance.
<p>Physical Manipulation:</p> <p>Hands-on massage or movement of painful areas</p>	<p>Musculoskeletal pain, especially lower-back and neck pain; pain from muscle underuse or overuse; and pain from adhesions or scars.</p>	<p>By restoring mobility, improving circulation, decreasing blood pressure, and relieving stress.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Massage: Massage Therapy is the manipulation of tissue to relax clumps of knotted muscle fiber, increase circulation, and release patterns of chronic tension. ● Chiropractic: Physically moving vertebrae or other joints into proper alignment, to relieve stress. ● Osteopathy: Realigning vertebrae, ribs, and other joints, as with chiropractic; osteopaths have training equivalent to that of medical doctors.
<p>Lifestyle Changes:</p> <p>Developing healthy habits at home and work</p>	<p>All types of chronic pain.</p>	<p>By strengthening the immune system and enhancing well-being, and by reframing one's relationship to (and, thus, experience of) chronic pain.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sleep Hygiene: Creating an optimal sleep environment to get deep, restorative rest; strategies include establishing a regular sleep-and-wake schedule and minimizing light and noise. ● Positive Work Environment: Having a comfortable workspace and control over one's activities to reduce stress and contribute to the sense of mastery over pain. ● Healthy Relationships: Nurturing honest and supportive friendships and family ties to ease anxiety that exacerbate pain. ● Exercise: Regular activity to build strength and lower stress.