

Guide to managing persistent pain at home

23 March 2020

Health & Community Services— Pain Management Team

This guide is designed to support you managing your pain during times of reduced access to **The Pain Management Service** or the community skills programmes we usually run.

Many of the clinicians who work in the Pain Team will be working alongside their colleagues during the COVID-19 outbreak so we will only be able to maintain a skeleton service for urgent queries and cases.

We want you to remain safe and as far as possible in control of your condition. We have put this guide together to give you practical advice and information to see you through until usual services are resumed.

Please watch this brief information film on Understanding Pain https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_3phB93rvI (or search in YouTube for *Understanding pain in 5 minutes*). Many of the things we would encourage you to do to manage your pain are also good for managing your health in general. These include: regular movement and light exercise; managing sleep; good nutrition & managing stress.

Contact number for the Pain Management team:

General enquiries & Clinical team—This is not an emergency number—messages will be picked up at various times during the week Tel: 444572

Keep Moving your body

Regular movement is essential for good health. Often moving is more difficult when you live with pain so here are our top tips and resources:

1. **Small & often is better than boom & bust** Your body and your brain need you to be moving regularly to remain safe and comfortable. Don't over do it but also be aware of underdoing things whilst you are not in your usual routines. Avoid sitting still for long periods
2. **Quality –v– quantity** Now is not the time to be trying to do more (more strength, more endurance, more flexibility). Use this confined time to focus on building a great foundation of quality of movement. Fluid, low effort movement that works *with* the rhythm of your breath. Check out areas of tension, reduce overflow of muscle work in areas of the body where it is not helpful. Work on a speed of movement that generates the greatest ease (not too fast and jerky or too slow and guarded).
3. **Flexibility; strength; heart health & balance** Try and do a variety of exercise to stop the boredom. Focus on one area of movement ability each day (flex; strength; heart health; balance). See [resources](#) for exercise ideas that target each area.
4. **Creating good movement and self care habits** It's challenging to develop good habits at the best of times and even more difficult during times of stress. Work smart not hard—use these habit building top tips to help you: **link your exercise habits to other daily routines** like when you wake up; brushing your teeth; preparing your meals; doing your housework; **aim for bite size chunks** 5 minutes at a time rather than trying to find a special 30 minutes; **get your family involved** if you all workout together you can motivate each other; **make it fun** you are far more likely to find the time if it is fun—laughing is also good for fluidity and immune function

5. **Check out the Pain Support Jersey Youtube channel for some guided exercise practise** <https://youtu.be/Cw3ZuYP1ZBA>

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- **Establish a daily routine.** Routines provide structure and purpose.
- **Balance your weekly routine** so you have a good mix of work (activities that have to be done), rest and leisure.
- **Think about the regular activities that are most important to you.** What are the important elements to these? Can you adapt them to carry out in the home? For example, instead of a class, following an online strength and balance routine.
- **Set daily goals** to provide purpose and a sense of achievement. This might include working through that list of the things you keep meaning to do but never get round to.
- **Identify the triggers that make you feel low** and look for ways to reduce or manage them.
- **Talk with family, friends and neighbours** to help them understand how you feel and how they can help. Can they talk you through using apps on your mobile phone, for instance?
- **Take care of yourself.** Eat and drink healthily with plenty of fruit, vegetables and water to support your immune function and energy levels. For more information see the [BDA website](#).
- **Keep in touch.** Arrange to speak to someone most days on the phone, through social media or over the garden fence. [Age UK](#) and [Silverline](#) have people to speak to.



Wishing you all the best with managing your pain and health during these difficult times
Best Wishes
The Pain Management Team

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Keep up your mindful awareness practice

1. **Small & often is better than boom & bust** It's not a good time to start learning new skills right now so you are best defaulting to things you have already learnt. Don't over do it but also be aware of underdoing things whilst you are not in your usual routines. This may be a 3-minute breathing space, a short body scan or mindfulness of breathing.
2. **Quality –v– quantity** Do remember that the practice may make you more aware of difficulty and so never force it. Low effort practices that work *with* the rhythm of your breath are best at these times. So, perhaps, just 3-4 sets of 10 breaths or a mini body scan. Some of the mindfulness for health *habit releasers* may work really well.
3. **Focus of the practice:** Be very explicit about which aspects of your experience may need most care: perhaps foundational practices right now (body scan, mindful breathing); perhaps opening to discomfort (compassionate acceptance); perhaps connecting out to others via telephone and videoconferencing or with acts of kindness.
4. If you haven't practiced before then we have a link of resource that you can familiarise yourself with below.

Managing Sleep

Sleep is key to health & wellbeing. Times of higher stress can impact on usual sleep routines. Sleep routines are also impacted by our general behaviour as well as our environment. You can't control everything so just work on the things that you can control.

To be able to sleep your brain and body need two key things:

1. you need to amass enough **non-sleep hours**—this means keeping napping to a minimum if it starts to impact on your night time sleep.
2. Your internal body clock is regulated by sunlight—you need to make sure that you get some direct sunlight every day. If you can't go outside—stand at your window and *drink in sunlight for at least 30 minutes*

Keep in mind these simple **dos** and **don'ts**:

Dos

- Get up and go to bed at the same time each day
- Keep the bedroom temperature low this aids with falling asleep (15-21° Adults or 19-21° Older Adults)
- Keep the bedroom dark to facilitate sleeping
- Keep your bed & bedroom for sleeping & sex—not for reading/tv etc.
- Turn off all mobile/electronic devices at least 30 mins before sleep time—put do not disturb on to prevent disrupting your sleep

Don'ts

- Don't rely on alcohol to manage stress or sleep—cut down or eliminate alcohol
- Watch your stimulants—Cut down on caffeine, nicotine; high sugary foods/drinks; high intensity exercise or stimulating reading/tv watching before bed. Keep caffeine to the mornings.
- Don't nap during the day if you are struggling with sleep at night



Books

On-Line Resources

1. NHS Choices website is good for general physical and mental health advice www.nhs.uk
2. Gentle movement and breathing www.doyogawithme.com — watch the video first before participating and then only look at beginner and short options—if you have never done this before
3. Information on pain—www.noigroup.com
4. Youtube videos by experts in their fields
 - Professor Lorrimer Moseley
 - Professor David Butler
 - Professor Rick Hanson
5. Breathworks free meditation online course for managing this emergency— <https://www.breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk/news/a-message-from-vidyamala-covid-19-free-course-for-troubling-times>
6. If you are freaking out or beating yourself up—quick meditation and guidance <https://elearning.breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=712>