

Chronic Pain Management

Understanding Chronic Pain

- Chronic pain is pain that lasts for more than 3 months.
- It can affect your physical health, emotional wellbeing, sleep, work, and relationships.
- While chronic pain may not always be curable, it can be managed.

It can be caused by:

- Conditions like arthritis or fibromyalgia
- Nerve damage (neuropathic pain)
- Post-surgery or injury pain

Sometimes the cause is unknown and pain can persist even after healing due to changes in how the nervous system processes pain signals.

Pain Management Strategies

Physical Activity

- Gentle, regular movement (e.g. walking, swimming, yoga) improves strength, flexibility, and mood.
- Start small and increase gradually.

Pacing Activities

- Balance rest and activity to avoid flare-ups
- Break tasks into manageable steps
- Avoid overdoing it on good days

Pain Medication

- May include paracetamol, anti-inflammatories.
- Work with your GP to find what's right for you.



Psychological Support

- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) can help you manage thoughts and behaviours around pain
- Mindfulness and relaxation techniques reduce stress and pain perception



Sleep & Routine

- Poor sleep increases pain sensitivity
- Aim for consistent sleep and wake times
- Try relaxation techniques before bed



Healthy Lifestyle

- Eat a balanced diet
- Avoid smoking and limit alcohol
- Manage stress through hobbies, nature, or support groups



Assistive Devices & Adaptations

- Use mobility aids, braces, or ergonomic tools if needed
- Occupational therapists can suggest ways to make daily tasks easier



Get Support

- Talk to your GP or pain specialist
- Join a local or online support group
- Consider seeing a physiotherapist, psychologist, or occupational therapist

Pain Tracking

Why Track Your Pain?

Tracking your pain helps you:

- Understand patterns and triggers
- Communicate more effectively with your healthcare team
- Monitor changes in intensity and impact
- Make informed decisions about treatment

Rate Your Pain

Use the 0-10 scale to the right to describe how strong your pain feels.

Daily Pain Log: What to track

- **Date & Time:** Record when you felt pain (e.g. 13th May 2025, 8am)
- **Pain Level:** Use the 0-10 scale to the right (e.g. 6)
- **Pain Description:** Describe the pain and the intensity (how strong it feels) in your own words. See a list of helpful words on the next page. (e.g. stiff, throbbing, intense)
- **Duration:** How long did it last? Was it constant or did it come and go? (e.g. constant for 1 hour)
- **What Were You Doing?** Note any activity, rest, or specific movement. (e.g. getting out of bed)
- **Aggravating and Easing Factors:** Did anything make it better or worse? (e.g. warm shower and rest helped, stairs made it worse)
- **How it affects you:** Describe how the pain affects you emotionally (e.g. draining, frustrating)

Worst Pain
imaginable

10

9

Severe:
limits most
activities

8

7

6

Moderate:
affects daily
activities

5

4

3

Mild:
annoying but
doesn't
interfere much

2

1

No Pain

0

Pain Descriptions

Aching
Throbbing
Burning
Sharp
Stabbing
Shooting
Cramping
Gnawing
Tingling
Pins and needles
Numb
Radiating
Searing
Scalding
Electric or shock-like
Pulsing
Pinching
Prickling
Itchy
Raw

Tips for Use:

- Combine words: *"Dull, aching pain in the lower back"*
- Mention timing: *"Sharp, shooting pain when walking"*
- Be specific: The more detail you give, the easier it is to tailor treatment

Intensity Descriptions

Mild
Moderate
Severe
Excruciating
Unbearable
Fluctuating
Constant
Intermittent
Dull
Intense
Deep
Surface-level (superficial)

Emotional/Impact Descriptions

Exhausting
Draining
Depressing
Disabling
Annoying
Frustrating
Distracting
Numbing (emotionally)
Fear-inducing
Debilitating

Track Over Time

- Use a journal or a tracking app (eg. MyPainDiary)
- Review your log weekly or monthly
- Look for patterns. Certain days, times, activities, or foods might affect pain

Final Tips

- Keep it simple and regular. Even short notes are helpful.
- Share your notes with your GP, physiotherapist, or pain team.