

Chronic Pain: What Does It Mean For You?

Doctors define chronic pain as pain that lasts longer than 3 months or pain that is still there after the body has had time to heal.

When pain lasts that long, it can be difficult to understand why.

Sometimes pain just hangs on.

The reasons are not always clear.

But there are things you can do that can help you feel better.

It can help to know that pain doesn't always mean that there's something else wrong.

Understanding this can give you the freedom to move in ways closer to how you moved before you were in pain.

It can be hard to think it's okay to do things when you hurt.

That's why making a pain management plan can help you take small steps toward less pain.

A pain management plan begins with goals.

These goals can be small, but it helps if they include things that you want to do.

Maybe it's something like taking your dog for a walk each day.

Or getting back to shooting a few hoops.

Maybe it's other things such as bending over to get clothes out of the dryer or going back to full activity at work.

Your plan can include ways you want to control pain without medicine, such as mindfulness meditation or a yoga class.

You can add physical treatments, like massage or acupuncture, to your plan.

Treatment also can include medicines and physical therapy.

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Other things can help too, such as counseling or joining support groups, to change how you think about your pain.

These are just some of the ideas that people use to bring their pain to a level they can live with.

Now remember that constant pain can make you depressed.

It can cause stress and make it hard for you to eat and sleep.

But you don't need to live with uncontrolled pain.

Talk to your doctor about your options.

Together you can work on a plan for living better.

Living with pain isn't easy.

So be kind to yourself while you find your way to a level that allows you to do the things you want and need to do in work and in play.