



## Living With Chronic Pain



### Overview

If you have pain that lasts for more than six months, you have "chronic" pain. It's different from the temporary pain you feel when you hurt yourself. With chronic pain, you may not know why you are hurting. Your pain may affect your whole body and your mind, causing problems that ripple through every part of your life. But there is hope. Here are some tips to help you manage chronic pain.

### Medical treatment

First, follow all of your doctor's recommendations. Medications, physical therapy and even surgery can help. So listen to your doctor's advice. Follow through with your appointments. Take medications as directed, and speak up if your care plan isn't working.

### Take care of your body

Stay as active and as healthy as possible. Eat a healthy diet, get plenty of sleep and exercise a safe amount every day. When you're active, your body releases endorphins. These are natural chemicals that help you feel good.

### Reduce stress

Often, taking care of your body is not enough. Physical and emotional pain are strongly linked. So take care of your mind, too. One of the best things you can do is reduce your stress. Minimize things that cause stress in your life. Hand some things off to other people. Learn to say no. If you still feel stress, try breathing exercises, meditation or other relaxation techniques.

### Take care of your emotional well-being

Take care of your emotional well-being. Reach out to others, especially to friends and loved ones who understand your situation. Maybe you can find a hobby that lets you see your friends regularly. If you feel lost, lonely or overwhelmed, find a local support group or talk to a professional therapist. Stay engaged, and think positively. This will help distract you from your pain.

### Conclusion

If you take an active role in your care and follow your doctor's advice, you can learn to manage chronic pain and take back your life.

Actor portrayals in photos

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