



Pain Management Program.
Movement and Pain Handout for week 2.

Think about how you would like movement to help you. If you are setting a project/goal to be working on during this program, you might like to consider some of the following:

1. Do you want to have a general maintenance regime? Systems in the body need to be fed which is what happens when we move. To stay healthy and well we need to move our body.
2. Do you want some ideas for gentle soothing movements for when you have a flare up of pain?
3. Do you want to work towards a specific goal something you would like to do or do better?

The good news is that research now shows that “snacking” on small amounts of movement has many benefits.

How does movement help particularly with pain management? Different types of activity have different benefits. There is no, ONE activity which will improve all areas. Considerations might be:-

- What benefits you are after?
- How would you like your life to improve?
- What has been shown to be especially beneficial in your particular condition?
- Do you like groups?
- Do you prefer indoors or outdoors?
- What time of day is best for you?

Breaking down types of movement is a bit artificial but allows us to consider the benefits in more detail. Types of physical activity can be divided into cardiovascular/endurance, strength, flexibility, balance, coordination and relaxation and they all have benefits particularly for pain. It is really helpful to have a choice of a “buffet” of types of activity.

Cardiovascular/endurance

Cardiovascular activity is anything which increases the heart rate.

- It strengthens your heart and lungs which allows you to continue to function longer with everyday tasks.
- It can help with fatigue conditions. It sounds illogical because movement uses energy but a small dose of increased heart rate can help improve the workings of the body’s energy production systems such as increasing numbers of mitochondria and, in the long term, increasing the energy available to you.
- It burns off stress chemicals (such as adrenaline and cortisol) and produces endorphins, thus improving your mood. This applies particularly to exercise done outdoors.
- It increases your resilience and your body’s ability to deal with everyday life.
- It can improve your sleep drive and thus the likelihood you will get a good night’s sleep (although don’t exercise hard in the evening as this can be stimulating).



- It Increases blood flow around the body and therefore nutrition and removal of waste products such as lactic acid which can make areas stiff and painful.

Type – anything that increases the heart rate:- taking the stairs, walking more briskly, dancing the kitchen for 3 minutes, mowing the lawn, cycling, shadow boxing for the count of 10 during the add break. If you are looking for a structured class, swimming, cycling, rowing, Zumba.

Strength

Strengthening activity is anything which includes movement against resistance.

- It will help protect your joints with strengthened muscles so has been shown to reduce arthritic pain and mechanical back pain.
- It is good for fatigue management as stronger muscles work more efficiently.
- Strengthening activity is often important if you are working towards a specific goal.
- A strong body also feels more resilient and able to cope with life's challenges.
- Tissues become more tolerant to normal life so are less likely to flare up.

Type – moving loads in everyday life, shopping, gardening tools, children, a rucksack with a book in it or do body resistance exercises such as stand to sit and wall push ups. A lot of movements where we lift our body weight like standing up from the chair, are excellent for leg and back strength and lifting shopping, gardening, lifting children are all powerful for the arms. If you are looking for a structured class, body pump, yoga, swimming, gym.

Flexibility/mobility

Flexibility/mobility activity is anything which moves the body gently through its range.

- Flexible muscles hold less tension and are less painful.
- Peripheral nerves are an important part of the pain system and are less irritable if flexible.
- Joints are nourished by synovial fluid and this is distributed by moving the joints through range. Thus helping with lubricating arthritic joints.
- When in pain it is easy to get into the habit of moving in particular unhelpful ways. Regular mobility or stretches can help to learn to move the body in new ways.
- It soothes the body and the pain system and can be an effective management technique during a flare up of pain
- It can help you produce serotonin, a natural painkiller.

Type – any movements through range of movement it doesn't have to be a hard "end of range" stretch. Change your position frequently, try to move around every 30 minutes. If you are looking for a class, tai chi, yoga, dance.

Balance/coordination

People living with pain sometimes describe not trusting their body and becoming quite fearful of moving and sometimes even less steady on their feet. Balance is a product of a lot of different systems in the body (feet, eyes, inner ear, leg muscles, sensory nerves, certain bits of the brain) and



practicing balance helps get these systems working together and increase your awareness of your body.

Specific exercises like practicing standing on one leg while the kettle boils can be helpful.

- It is easy to train and impacts on confidence and mood.
- Improved balance leads to improved coordination so less bumping into things, dropping things or even falls.

Type – building in balance exercises into life (clean teeth standing on one leg, tandem walking), Classes include- Pilates, yoga, tai chi, dance, ball games.

Relaxation

Relaxation activities include anything which slows the breathing and/or heart rate.

- It reduces muscle tension and can be particularly helpful for conditions affected by muscle tension such as headaches and TMJ.
- It improves the quality of sleep.
- It improves conditions influenced by stress by allowing the mind to find a place of peace despite the pain.

Ultimately the best exercise for you is the one that's done and the one that's done is the one that's fun. You need to find something that feels like a pleasure not a chore.

Dose – where to start

“Water is good but if you try and drink a swimming pool you drown.”

Find your baseline first and stick to it for a while. How much can I do and not flare things up? Listen to your body and find the “just right” amount for you at that time and then monitor the effect over the next 24 hours. Understand your body’s response to activity and being compassionate with yourself is the key. Once you have established the baseline you may want to, very slowly (i.e. not more than 10%) increase it but START LOW GO SLOW, little and often is the best approach and you get there.

Consider what your barriers to increased movement might be and address them.

Remember your micromoments such as:- shuttle walks in the garden, standing up and down during the adverts, standing on one leg while the kettle boils, dancing to a track on the radio, big arm waves in the chair, shadow boxing for the count of 10, brief moments of activity build up.

GOOD LUCK You can a one-to-one appointment with a pain specialist physiotherapist if you need some help to work on this goal.