



A Menu For Self Care

Evidence-based interventions for pain relief

Relaxation

The relaxation response contributes to pain relief, diminishing the emotional components of pain, strengthening coping abilities and a sense of control, as well as decreasing fatigue and promoting sleep.

Deep Breathing

Purposefully modifying the rate, depth, and rhythm of your breathing.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Helps develop awareness of tension in your body by alternately tightening and relaxing various muscle groups. Can be modified to passive muscle relaxation if the rinsing of certain muscle groups is contradicted.

Meditation

Intently and purposefully focusing on meaningful words or phrases. Pairs well with deep breathing.

Imagery

Stories or narratives influence images that your mind creates. The narratives should include all your senses. The practice can make your body mimic the relaxation response that would occur if you were in the imagined place.

Massage

Manipulation of tissues (as by rubbing, kneading, or tapping) with the hand or instrument for relation or therapeutic purposes.

Lavender Essential Oil

Breathing in a 1-5% dilution may help reduce pain. Instructions: Mix 1-5 drops of pure essential Lavender Oil in 5ml of natural food-grade carrier (such as coconut oil). Apply mixture to palms. Cup palms over your nose and breathe deeply. Caution: Do not use if you are allergic to lavender. Do not apply on broken skin. Use only 1 drop of oil.

Cold

Use in the first 48 hours after soft tissue injury. Check skin every 5 minutes. Re-apply every hour as needed or alternate with heat application.

Heat

Heat causes the blood vessels to dilate, increasing circulation to the area. Use a barrier between your skin and the heat source and check your skin at regular intervals. You can also alternate with application of cold.

Music

Listen to a wide variety of music you enjoy. May be combined with deep breathing, imagery, and gentle exercise to provide enhance relaxation.

Laughter

Research has shown that laughing lowers blood pressure, reduces stress hormones, and triggers the release of the body's natural painkillers (endorphins). Make a list of your favorite comedies and have them readily available.

Light/Gentle Exercise

Do some gentle stretching, go for a walk, join a yoga class.

Diet

Some general dietary guidelines include enjoying plenty of fruits and vegetables, lean meats, dairy, and whole grains while avoiding sugar, caffeine, aspartame, and alcohol.

Distraction

Distraction can shift your focus away from the pain. When you are able to focus your attention on a different sensation or another stimulus, you experience a decreased level of pain, distress, and anxiety.

Additional Intentional Interventions

Support Group

Support groups ease feelings of isolation and help you accept and manage your diagnosis.

- The American Chronic Pain Association may be able to help you locate a group near you. Call 1-800-533-3231 or visit www.acpa.org for assistance.
- As a Pentec Health patient, you are also invited to attend a monthly telephonic support group. Ask your nurse for details.

Some helpful apps to help you get started. Help is as close your smartphone!

Breathe2Relax

Instructs and facilitates deep breathing.

Virtual Hope Box

Provides suggestions and tools for distraction activities, relaxation suggestions, coping tools, and inspiration.