

the spinal column

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MANAGING YOUR CHRONIC PAIN - REGAINING CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE



Is pain taking over your life? Do you feel isolated or even helpless? Being in pain can be exhausting. You may find you have trouble working, sleeping, or just doing day-to-day tasks. But you can learn to manage pain, feel better, and regain control of your life.

What is Chronic Pain?

Chronic pain is long-lasting pain due to a condition that can't be cured or easily treated. In some cases, the exact cause of this pain can't be found. Chronic pain is a serious medical problem that may:

- Seem to control your life
- Lead to depression, anxiety, anger, and personality changes
- Affect work, sleep, relationships, sexuality, your overall health, and other aspects of a normal life

Myths about pain

People may say, "It can't be real - you look fine." Or you may hear, "You'll just have to learn to live with it." In fact: You can be in real pain and not look ill.

You don't have to "just live with it." With time and some help, you can learn methods for

controlling pain and living well.

Tools for Coping with Pain

Control of chronic pain is done mainly through self management. This means that you take an active role. It doesn't mean that you are alone. Your health care providers will help you learn methods for coping with pain. The tools you may use may include

- Exercise
- Mind/body therapies
- Leading a healthier life
- Chiropractic care

To manage your pain well, you'll need support from your family, friends, and health care providers. Don't be afraid to ask them for help.

Setting Goals

You can function better and reduce pain.

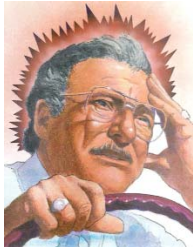
But it may not be possible for you to be completely free of pain. Don't put off your life until the pain stops or is cured. Instead, set goals for improving your quality of life such as:

- Sleeping through the night most nights
- Returning to work or other activities
- Going out with friends a certain number of times each month.

Pain affects your life. Your sleep, mood, activity, and energy level are all disrupted by pain. Being tired, depressed, and out of shape makes the pain worse and harder to cope with. In managing your pain you have to break the pain cycle and find the right treatment.

Chiropractic is a natural approach and most effective when combined with self-care.

Headache Relief With Regular Chiropractic Care



Nobody likes headaches. They can strike with little warning and cause debilitating pain -- especially cervicogenic headaches (HA), which are defined as pain that originates in the cervical spine, or neck area, and refers up to the head.

Researchers investigated the effect of chiropractic treatment on HA in 20 randomized patients, specifically focusing on the relationship between the number of chiropractic treatments and pain relief. Participants were assigned to one of three treatment groups for comparison: Group one received a total of three office visits, one visit per week, for chiropractic manipulation; group two received a total of nine office visits, three visits per week, for chiropractic manipulation; and group three received 12 total visits, four visits per week.

Researchers discovered a correlation between the number of chiropractic visits and positive outcome in headache patients. "For HA pain, substantial differences were found between participants receiving 1 treatment per week and those receiving either 3 or 4 treatments per week," the researchers wrote. The researchers indicated that a larger clinical trial testing the relationship of HA and chiropractic treatment is warranted, and concluded that there are benefits to "9 to 12 [chiropractic] visits over 3 weeks for the treatment of HA/neck pain and disability. A larger number of visits than 12 in 3 weeks may be required for maximum relief and durability of outcomes."

If you suffer from headaches, your doctor of chiropractic can help.

For Children, Heavy Backpacks Are a Real Pain



Almost every child and teenager uses a backpack to carry his or her books to and from school. Over the years, there has been much debate as to whether heavy backpacks may cause back and/or shoulder pain in children. Understanding how backpacks carry weight (and how backpacks are worn by children) can help identify the causes of such pain, which may lead to better backpack design and increased safety and comfort.

In a recent study, 10 children wore backpacks loaded to 0%, 10%, 20% or 30% of their body weight for 30 seconds to determine the amount of pressure under the backpack's shoulder straps.

While wearing the backpacks, the children also reported whether they felt any pain and, if so, how severe the pain was.

Pressure beneath the shoulder straps was "significantly increased" when the backpack was loaded at 10% of the child's body weight or higher. Increased pressure also was associated with an increase in pain, and the pressures were higher on the right shoulder than the left shoulder. Over the long term, the authors noted that uneven backpack loads could alter the curvature of a child's spine and produce back pain.

Based on the results of the study, the authors offered four recommendations for children who wear backpacks:

1. Backpacks should be positioned high on the back.
2. Backpack straps should be worn over both shoulders.
3. Weight in the backpacks should be minimized.
4. Backpacks should have wide shoulder straps.
5. Backpacks should have straps that can be tied in the front of the body

Doctors of chiropractic who treat children should advise their patients (and their patients' parents) about the importance of proper backpack use and keeping the weight in a child's backpack to a minimum.