

# Pain Education Empowerment Programme

## *Understanding Pain is the Golden Key*

© Authors: Romy Parker, Janet Keet, Melissa Saw, Rowan Duys, Johan van der Walt and the Groote Schuur Hospital Chronic Pain Management Team



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Western Cape  
Government

FOR YOU

Health

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# Treating Persistent Pain

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This programme aims to **EMPOWER YOU** with **SELF-MANAGEMENT** skills for **TREATING PERSISTENT PAIN** so that you can get your **LIFE BACK**.

Scientific research tells us that to get the most out of this course it is important for you to:

1. Attend every week for the full course (6-weeks)
2. Set goals
3. Share your experiences and goals with the group
4. Take part in all activities
5. Continue with the medical care recommended for the treatment of your conditions

## COURSE CONTENT:

1. Week 1: Self-management and Persistent pain physiology
2. Week 2: Exercise
3. Week 3: Stress Management
4. Week 4: Eating Well
5. Week 5: Medications
6. Week 6: Continuing as a successful self-manager

Your course leader is \_\_\_\_\_. She/he is a qualified physiotherapist and has been trained in all the information you will be going through in the discussions. Physiotherapists are experts in safe ways to exercise and relaxation techniques. If you need to contact the department please use the following numbers:

GSH Physio OPD: (021) 4044410

GSH Pain Clinic: (021) 4046114

***Scientific Research tells us that completing a course like this one is the most effective way to treat persistent pain.***



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## Week 1: Self-Management and Pain

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### What is self-management?

1. When we use the words “self-management” we mean taking **RESPONSIBILITY** for our own health.
2. A self-managers are able to get the **HELP** they need, when they need it. It does not mean they are working on their own. Successful self-managers are able to choose to **WORK WITH** the health team to manage their health and live a healthy lifestyle (just like a manager in a business – they don’t do everything themselves, they work with a team).
3. To be a good self-manager, **LEARNING** is important: You need to understand your pain condition, how it affects you and the best ways to treat it.
4. **THINKING** is the next step in being a successful self-manager. You need to think about what is missing in your life and what you would like to be able to do in the future
5. The final step in being a successful self-manager is **DOING**, setting goals, taking action and **PRACTICING** what you learn to make the things you have thought about happen.

**GOAL: A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE!**



## Self-management steps

Step 1: What do you want to be able to do? What do you miss doing? (if you can't think of anything, imagine that you could wave a magic wand and all your pain was gone. With your pain gone, what would you do tomorrow that you haven't done today?)

1) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## Step 2: How are you going to get / achieve the goals you have written down in Step 1?

**BRAINSTORM:** Never assume that what you want to be able to do is impossible. Always look for every option and look at it from every angle.

Write down here three different ways that you could try to achieve what you want to do:

1) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Step 3: Make sure that how you are going to set goals is SMART!

Before we can start DOING, we need an ACTION PLAN. A good ACTION PLAN is a SMART goal (SMART = Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, testable)

*S - Be SPECIFIC: (What?)*

Exactly **WHAT** are you going to do? e.g. you could decide that to meet people you are going to invite your neighbour for tea.

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*M - Can you MEASURE it? (How much?)*

How much are you going to do? eg. are you going to invite one neighbour for tea or are you going to invite lots of neighbours over? Lots of people are much more tiring than one person. So you have to decide how much you can do.

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*A- ACTION: When will you DO it? (When?)*

Then you must decide on exactly which day you are going to do the activity and at what time of the day. Maybe it is better to invite your neighbour for tea in the morning because you get tired in the afternoon. Or if you feel sick in the morning from your medicines maybe it is better to invite your neighbour for afternoon tea.

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R – REPEATABLE/ REALISTIC: (How often?)

This is always the hardest part. We all would like to be able to do more things every day. But we are human and this is not always possible. When people want to start exercising, we often say we are going to do it every day. BUT if we then miss a day we feel that we have failed and we give up. How often will you invite your neighbour for tea? Not every day but maybe once a week. You know that you won't become friends immediately and that it will take time.

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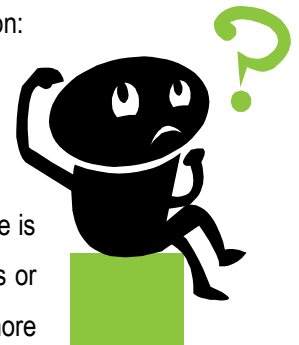
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T – TEST: Is it a good plan? (Confidence?)

To test whether you have come up with a good plan you need to ask yourself this question:

*“If I give myself a score from 0 -10 for how confident I am that I will achieve my plan this week, where 0 is not at all confident, and 10 is totally confident. What score will I give to show how confident I am that I can complete this plan?”*

If your answer is 7 or more out of 10 then this is probably a very good plan. If your score is less than 7 you need to think about why you are not confident. What are the problems or barriers? Can you change the plan or solve the problems to make yourself feel more confident?



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Not at all										Totally	
confident	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	confident

**Step 4: Write it down and paste it up!**

Now, write your plan down and put it somewhere you will see it every day. There is an action plan form at the end of this section and 5 more at the back of this book. Use them every week you are doing this course. You can always draw more of them to keep working on your plans in the future.

For example: This week, I will walk (*what*) around the block (*how much*) before lunch (*when*) three times (*how many*).

This week I will:

\_\_\_\_\_ (*what*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*how much*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*when*)

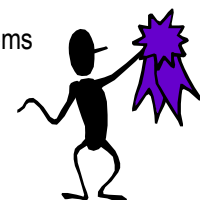
\_\_\_\_\_ (*how many/often?*)

How confident are you that you can complete this action plan (*test?*)

\_\_\_\_\_

Not at all										Totally	
confident	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	confident

Now you need to carry out your action plan. If it is a good plan then doing it is usually fairly easy. It helps to tell family or friends what your plan is and to report back to them on how you are doing. On this course you are going to make a plan every week and record how you get on. It helps to report back on things because you can then have an idea on how well you are doing. If you haven't been able to keep to the plan you can discuss the problems you might have had and make plans to cope with them.



**Step 5: Check and Reward**

Always check your results and give yourself a reward for having achieved your plan. Also think about how achieving your plan is making you feel. In the example we talked about, you could congratulate yourself for having invited your neighbour for tea, you would also think about how you now feel. Is the plan helping you to achieve what you want? Write down here how it is helping you get to where you want to be

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **A good action plan is:**

- Something I want to do
- Something I can expect to do this week
- Is specific
- Answers the questions: What? How much? When? How often?
- I am confident that I can achieve with a score of at least 7 out of 10.

### *What about problems?*

What if your plan doesn't work? Are you going to give up and decide you had a bad plan? There are NINE steps to solving problems. These are:

1. Deciding what the problem is (you might need friends and family to help here)
2. List ideas to solve the problem
3. Select one idea to try
4. How did it go?
5. If it didn't work, try another idea
6. If your ideas don't work, ask friends, family, counsellors, professionals for ideas
7. Finally you might have to accept that you can't solve THIS problem now. PUT IT ON HOLD!
8. Try to tackle another EASIER problem, to get confident again.
9. Keep taking SMALL steps forward towards YOUR GOAL.

At the end of each section and at the back of the workbook there are "Action Plan Forms". Use these forms to plan what you want to do and how you are going to do it. We are now going to discuss pain. This is part of LEARNING which is important if you are going to be a successful self-manager.

## A successful self-manager is someone who:

- Sets goals
- Makes a list of ways to achieve those goals
- Makes action plans to achieve the goals
- Carries out the action plans
- Checks on their progress every week
- Can change the action plan if there are problems
- Gives themselves a reward for achieving their goals



## A Successful Self-Manager must sometimes DIG DEEP:

### 1. PATIENCE

- To take it one new step at a time.
- To not exceed training agreed upon in SMART goal setting
- Realise that your brain has become overprotective so if you “FLARE UP, DON’T FREAK OUT”!

### 2. PERSISTENCE

- To stay focused. “USE IT OR LOSE IT”

### 3. COURAGE

- To remember that pain is complex
- To face that which triggers you
- FEAR (false expectations/ events appearing real)

### 4. COMMITMENT

- There is no quick fix / magic pill / wand
- It is a journey to recovery
- Acceptance
- Learning to DANCE beside / on the pain

# PAIN

“KNOWLEDGE IS THE GREATEST PAIN LIBERATOR OF ALL”

“KNOW PAIN, KNOW GAIN”

“Pain is an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage or described in terms of such damage. Pain is subjective.” (International Association for the Study of Pain)

1. Pain is a distressing experience
2. We can feel pain with or without tissue damage
3. Pain is based on the brain's unconscious decision that we are in danger



So that means that Everyone has their OWN pain?  
No one can tell me what my pain feels like!  
My pain is real! My body may be in danger but it also may not be?  
Pain is not a good measure of whether there is something wrong with my body

But – why do we feel pain? Is some pain good for us? **YES - ACUTE PAIN is good pain**

ACUTE PAIN is the pain that occurs as a result of damage to the body and it lasts while the body heals itself.

Once the body is healed, the pain STOPS!

Eg: If you twist your ankle, it is sore for a few days but slowly the pain decreases and finally disappears

ACUTE PAIN can also be a SURVIVAL mechanism: it can warn you of POTENTIAL injury (that MAY or MAY NOT happen). Think of it as your own internal alarm that alerts you to potential DANGER in the body

Eg: If you touch a hot stove with your hand, you feel the pain and you withdraw your hand quickly so as not to burn yourself. In this case you may feel the pain but there is no damage if you were quick about moving your hand.

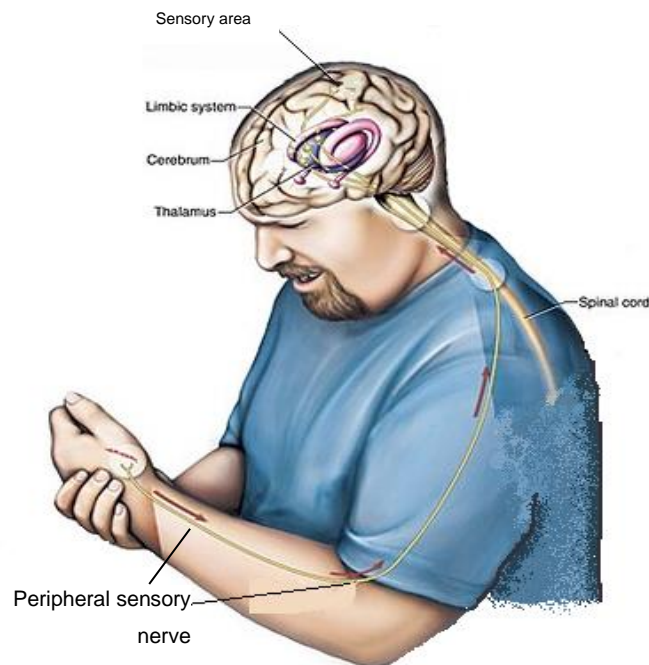
## ACUTE PAIN - NOW, ISN'T THAT CLEVER?!

Acute pain...

1. *helps us take care of our body*
2. *can be life saving*
3. *signals the need to pay attention*
4. *gets better with analgaesics*

## DANGER PATHWAYS

When we feel acute pain, there are a number of events and pathways that the danger signals travel through to get to the brain.



This man has cut his hand

1. **Peripheral:** The damage will cause danger messangers in the skin and body tissue of the hand to send a danger signal via the nerves to the spinal cord
2. **Spinal Cord:** A second order neuron / "EAR" of the spinal cord allows the danger message to move via the nerves to another "EAR" in the brain called the thalamus
3. **Brain:** The thalamus acts like a receptionist and allows the message to travel via the nerves to different parts of the brain. These include parts of the brain involved in emotion, thinking, feeling, memory, movement and sensation.
4. All of these areas of the Brain work together and based on everything it knows about your life, sometimes makes the decision to defend you, by creating the sensation of pain. (sometimes it doesn't create pain!)

## **SOMETIMES our Pain System gets “OUT OF ORDER”!!!**

1. We feel **TOO LITTLE Pain** and we don't protect ourselves enough (eg, we burn our hand)
2. We feel **TOO MUCH Pain** and we **OVERPROTECT** ourselves eg, avoiding movements / exercise our bodies need

I have pain all the time and nothing seems to be helping. Are you telling me there is nothing I can do for my Pain because of these changes? Do I have to live with this pain forever?



No, to combat your pain **YOU** need to work **WITH** and be part of a team who will help you manage your pain. You can learn to gain control of your pain, rather than letting it control you.

The first step in managing your pain, is **UNDERSTANDING** your pain. “**KNOW PAIN, KNOW GAIN**”



## **Chronic pain**

Chronic pain is pain that has outlived its usefulness.

It is pain that persists even though there is not longer tissue damage or potential tissue damage, it is pain that lasts after the normal time expected for an injury to heal

Chronic pain is felt because of changes that take place in the nervous system. These changes can take place in:

1. Peripheral nerves
2. Spinal Nerves
3. Brain Nerves

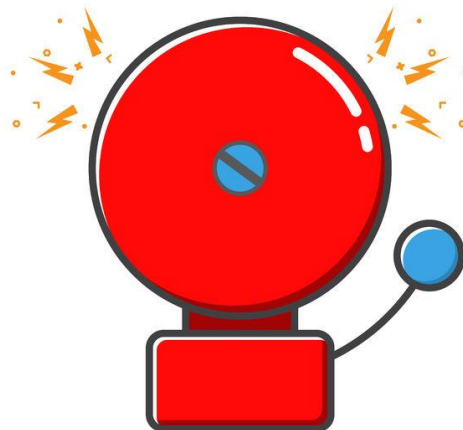
## 1. PERIPHERAL NERVES

The nerves which carry danger messages can become sensitive. This means that they lower their *threshold* to stimulus. This is normal when you have acute pain e.g. when you have a burn you know that it hurts when you touch it, touch isn't dangerous but the nerves have become sensitive and so send danger messages. This is helpful in acute pain as it means we pay attention to things and protect them so that they can heal.

In chronic pain, the nerves are sensitive even though there isn't any damage or healing happening. This means that the nerves send danger messages when things that are not dangerous happen – like touch or movement. Its as if the volume is being turned up and the danger messages become louder!

## 2. SPINAL NERVES

The second nerve in the spinal cord can also become sensitive. Its like it tunes in to the danger messages so that now it hears very quiet messages which normally it wouldn't hear and passes these messages on to the brain. Just like a burglar alarm that is set too sensitive, a butterfly could set it off. Again, this means that things which aren't actually dangerous result in danger messages being sent to the brain.



### 3. BRAIN NERVES

A few things happen to the nerves in the brain!

- a. The brain nerves get too sensitive so that they are listening for danger messages all the time and are on high alert waiting for these danger signals – that’s tiring! These danger signals can come to the brain as a result of stress, changes in temperature (ie a cold day you feel more cold than on a hot day), pressure, movement, or the immune system (ie when you are fighting a cold) and the brain can defend the body in MANY ways by producing, for example FEAR, STIFFNESS, PAIN or ILLNESS.



- b. The brain has the amazing power to make its own morphine, it has a drug cabinet. When we have an injury and acute pain, our brain unlocks the drug cabinet and gives us morphine



so that we feel better. In chronic pain, the brain loses the key to the drug cabinet so we don't get our own morphine (which is 100x stronger than oral morphine!).

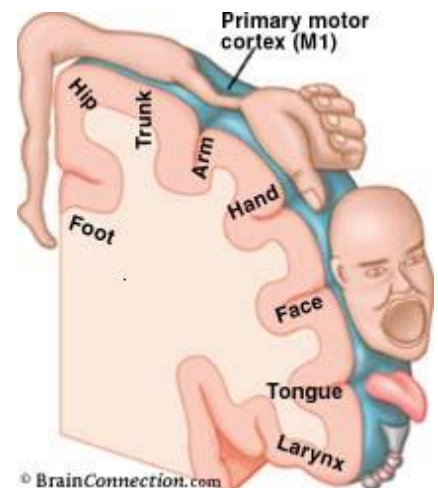
Learning about pain helps you to find the keys to **unlock** the cabinet again!



- c. The brain's map gets smudged! In your brain there is a map of your body like in this picture: One map for sensation and one for movement. These maps are like "Google maps" and need regular information from the body to stay accurate / correct. Google maps updates all the time depending on changes to roads and areas, however, in countries that do not allow access to google maps the maps are not as clear and detailed.



SENSORY BRAIN MAP: When you injure yourself in any way (even a tiny paper cut), the danger messages that reach the brain pass to this map, so you are able to tell exactly where on your body this tiny paper cut is. If you have had pain for a long time the part of the SENSORY map that represents the painful area will get BIGGER. e.g. If you have had lower back pain for a long time, the area on the map that represents the lower back will get bigger. This can result in you starting to feel pain in a larger area of your body ie "spreading pain" from your lower to upper back and down your legs. As the map in your brain gets bigger, you feel the pain over a bigger area.



MOVEMENT BRAIN MAP: Similarly, if you have had pain for a long time and avoided or reduced movement of that body part, the MOVEMENT map will be smaller and it will be more difficult to move that body part well.

## THE GOOD NEWS IS.....

## THE NERVES AND THE BRAIN CAN CHANGE!!

We call this NEUROPLASTICITY – as we learn and start doing things differently and exercise we give healthy information to our brains, the normal BRAIN MAP can once again be redrawn and the volume buttons can be turned down. Not only that – but we can also find the keys to unlock the drug cabinet.

Knowledge and Movement helps us turn DOWN the volume, UNLOCK the drug cabinet and REDRAW our maps



All these CHANGES are happening in my brain!  
Am I going MAD?!



No, it definitely does not mean you are going mad! All the changes that happen are to the NERVES in your body and in your brain. Your pain is not imaginary pain.



One of the most effective ways to retrain your nerves is with SAFETY IN ME MESSAGES (SIMS):  
It is your brain! Talking to your brain helps calm down the nerves. Saying things to your self can help RESET nerves:  
“I hear you”  
“I know you are stressed and sensitive”  
“I know its sensitive but I know my body has healed”  
“Let’s find something to help calm you down”

### Here is the take-home message...

- Hurt does not always mean harm. There can be pain without injury or something being wrong.
- There are physiological reasons why there is pain without injury.
- Your pain is not imaginary, in your head or psychological.
- Chronic pain is not the same as acute pain.
- Chronic pain is not a sign of ongoing damage
- Non-pain stimuli (e.g. stretching or pressure) may send danger signals rather than Stretching or pressure messages to the brain which can then result in pain.
- An increase in your pain (with or without exercise) does not mean a new injury.

### **You can get more information about this Online at:**

1. *retrainpain.org*
2. *tamethebeast.org*
3. *PROTECOMETER found in app store for Ipads*
4. *Black dog named depression*
5. *Understanding pain in < 5 minutes*
6. *Pain and Me: Tamar Pincus*
7. *Chronic Pain and Pacing Activities* – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EPsWYO-kWdU>
8. *“When your child hurts”* – Dr Rachael Coakley

**NEW THOUGHTS**  
**SAFETY IN ME (SIM)**  
 messages: heal my brain  
 I'm OK  
 I can do this  
 I'm a good self healer  
 I may flare up but won't freak out!

**THOUGHTS**  
**DANGER IN ME (DIM)**  
 messages: poison my brain  
 Something is wrong  
 What is the matter?  
 I can't be fixed  
 I'm going to be in a wheelchair  
 I have cancer

**INNER BLACK CIRCLE:**  
**WHAT HAPPENS WHEN**  
**I'M IN PAIN!**

**PAIN**

**FEELINGS**  
 Miserable  
 Emotional  
 Irritated  
 Moody  
 Frustrated  
 Feel like nothing

**NEW FEELINGS**  
 Peaceful  
 Calm  
 Accepting  
 Loving  
 Connected

**ACTIONS**

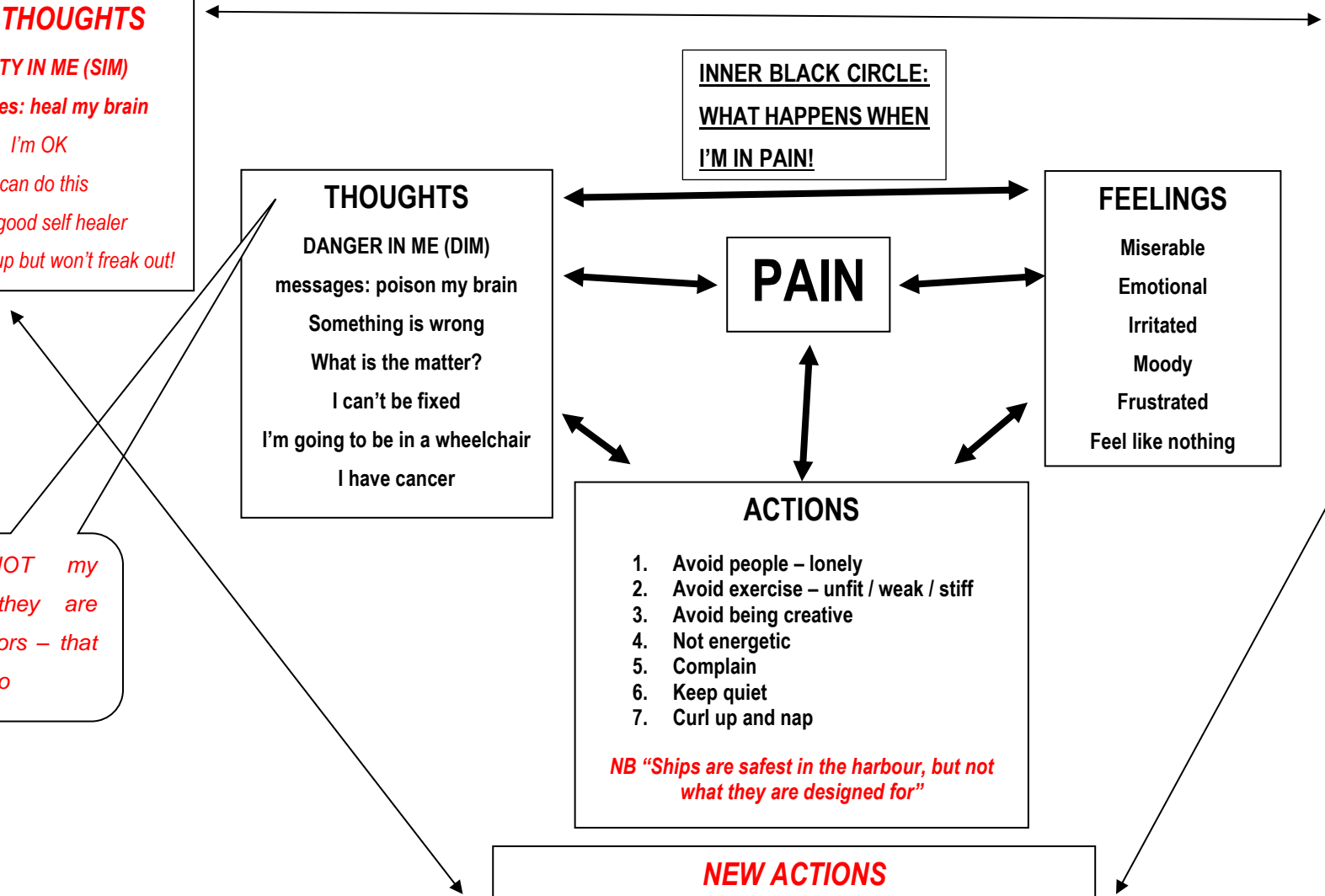
1. Avoid people – lonely
2. Avoid exercise – unfit / weak / stiff
3. Avoid being creative
4. Not energetic
5. Complain
6. Keep quiet
7. Curl up and nap

**NB "Ships are safest in the harbour, but not what they are designed for"**

**NEW ACTIONS**

1. Meet with a friend
2. Exercise / Dance
3. Get creative eg garden / sew / paint / do something you love
4. Pray / meditate / listen to music / breathe / be mindful in the moment / relaxation
5. Stroke your pet
6. Talk to someone / psychologist
7. Eat healthy food
8. Volunteer to help your favourite charity

*I am NOT my thoughts, they are merely visitors – that come and go*



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## Week 2: Exercise

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### “MOTION IS LOTION”

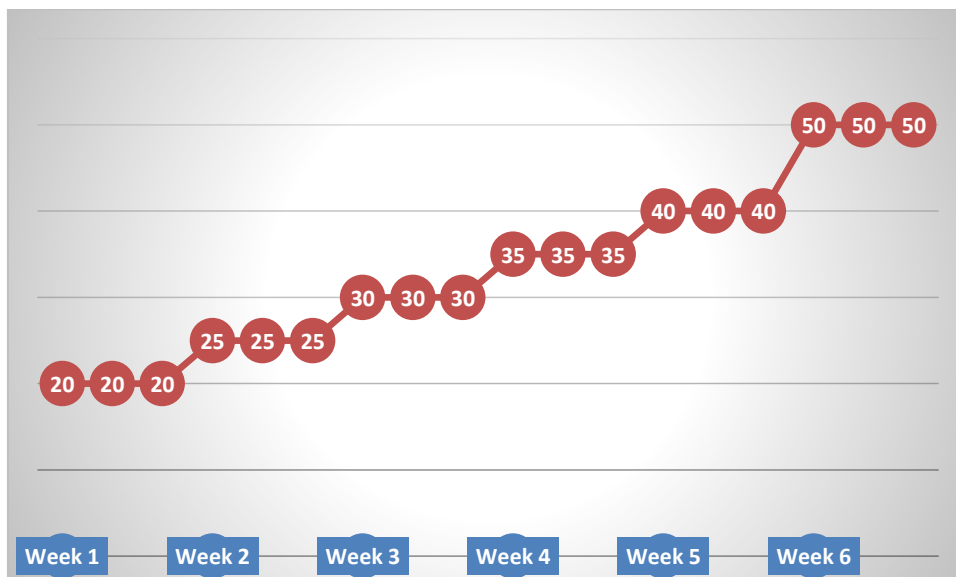
Scientific Research tells us that EXERCISE is:

1. SAFE and one of the best treatments for people living with chronic pain
2. VERY IMPORTANT to keep healthy and has a lot of good effects on:
  - a. **Nerves & Joints** are made flexible (well oiled) and less sensitive so you can move better with less pain
  - b. **Muscles & Bones** lay down stronger tissue and old fluid which makes your nerves sensitive is pumped out of the tissues
  - c. **Tissues** heal stronger & faster
  - d. **Blood** becomes thinner and your blood sugar stabilises, decreasing your risk of a stroke and diabetes
  - e. **Heart & Lungs** strengthen and are less likely to get diseased (eg. heart attacks)
  - f. **Immune System** fights infections better so you get fewer colds and viruses
  - g. **Endurance and Fatigue** during the day improves – YES, exercising during the day makes you less tired AND YOU SLEEP better at night!
  - h. **Brain** gets more oxygen and food so your concentration and memory improve. The brain puts out more “happy hormones” so your mood improves. It unlocks your brain’s own drug cabinet so you feel less pain over time. Your brain’s movement and sensation maps are improved so you move better and become more confident, courageous and in control of your life!



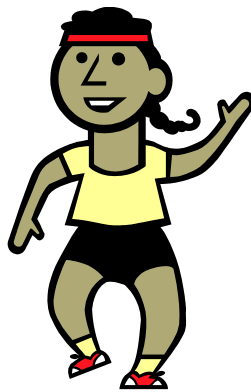
### “PACE IT, DON’T RACE IT”

**Graded exercise therapy – gradually increasing exercise over time**



### **Exercise is good for:**

- Improving mood
- Strength
- Improving sleep
- Concentration and memory
- Heart and lung health
- Decreasing body fat
- Digestion
- Increasing confidence to self-manage chronic illness.



### **Do not exercise if:**

- You have a fever
- You are dizzy
- You have been vomiting
- You have diarrhoea
- Your joints have suddenly become swollen
- You have a new pain which you don't know the cause of

Miss one exercise session if you have one of these problems until you can speak to a nurse or doctor. This does not mean you should never exercise but you need to make sure you are not becoming ill.

### What kind of exercise should you do?

You do not have to join a gym or a club to get exercise. There are lots of ways of exercising from formal sports like running, playing football or netball, swimming or playing tennis. But, walking is also a very good way to exercise. Any activity which makes your heart beat faster and makes you breathe a little harder is exercise. Dancing is exercise, walking up the stairs is exercise, gardening is exercise. There are lots of ways that we can exercise every day without having to go to a class or join a club. You could walk a little further before catching the bus or the taxi or you could play with your children. Try out some "GREEN" Exercise by going for a walk in your local park / on the mountain!

There are three general kinds of exercise you can do.

1. **Endurance** exercise; like walking, running, dancing or swimming. Endurance exercise is sometimes called aerobic exercise which means that you will be breathing faster and your heart will be beating faster too. We know that this kind of exercise is very important to keep healthy and we need to do 30 minutes of this kind of exercise three times a week to keep healthy.
2. The second kind of exercise is **strengthening** exercise. This kind of exercise focuses on making us stronger. To make muscles stronger we have to do exercises which make the muscles work hard against a resistance, like weight training but you can also do strength training by working with heavy bags of shopping!
3. The last kind of exercise is **stretching** exercise. Stretching exercises focus on keeping us mobile and flexible.



#### **Types of exercise:**

1. **ENDURANCE** exercise which makes you breathe harder (sometimes called aerobic)
2. **STRENGTHENING** exercise which makes you stronger
3. **STRETCHING** or flexibility exercise which makes you more mobile and supple

We know one of the hardest things about exercise is not doing it once, but doing it again and again. There are several steps we can follow to make sure that when we start to exercise we stick to it. We all make lots of excuses why we can't exercise. Let's look at the most common excuses.

### ***"I don't have time"***

It doesn't take a lot of time to start exercising. Five minutes a day is a good start. We make time to take medicine because we know without it we would become ill. Exercise is as important as medicine to help us remain healthy (remember it can never replace your drugs). If we know that it is that important we can make time for it.



### ***"I'm too tired"***

When people become ill they often become less active. As you become less active, your body loses fitness and you become weaker, you may feel stiffer and you tire more easily. This means that exercising might feel harder and so you exercise less. This often results in a downward spiral of activity and people often get to the point where even walking down the street to visit the neighbour can feel like too much. Being active or doing exercise when you are feeling tired will give you more energy and make you feel less tired.



### ***"I'm too sick"***

You may be too sick to undertake very vigorous exercise but you can still aim to be more active. You can even break your exercise into one minute sessions which you repeat several times through your day. The fitter you get, the better you will be able to cope with your illness



### ***"I get enough exercise already"***



You may be getting a lot of exercise already in your job or simply walking around doing your daily chores. But for most people if we add this time up, it still isn't enough exercise to keep them fully fit. This kind of exercise also doesn't include one of the most important components that make exercise good for us – fun!

### ***"Exercise is boring"***

You don't have to do the exercises that everyone else does if they are boring. Choose something that is fun, exercise with a friend or with your favourite music or listen to the radio. You can also keep your exercises fun by changing them regularly.



### *“Exercise is painful”*

Exercise may be uncomfortable but it shouldn't be painful. If you have pain before you start to exercise, it should not get worse while you are exercising. If you do not have pain before you start to exercise and you start to feel pain while you exercise you need to stop exercising and evaluate your pain using the guidelines in Week 1: Pain. If you have muscle or joint pain for more than two hours after you exercise then you have probably done too much. You have FLARED UP BUT DON'T FREAK OUT! Your body will reset again. You have not damaged yourself. Do not stop your SMART goal exercise programme. Next time do a little less, either exercise for less time or less vigorously.

### *“It's too dangerous, it's too hot, it's too cold”*

There are always reasons like this not to exercise. Remember that exercise can be done anywhere and anytime. You can put on music in your home and dance, if its too hot you could walk around shops which have air-conditioning. Finding a group of people to exercise with will not only make it safer but also more fun!



### *“I know I won't stick to it so there is no point in starting”*



First review the steps we discussed on how to be a successful self-manager. If you set your exercise goals using these steps you have more chance of sticking to your exercises. Remember too the important step of rewarding yourself for achieving your goals, this makes it easier to move on to your next goal. We are now going to have a look at the important steps to take to be successful at putting your exercise plan into action.

### **Steps to success with exercise:**

- Set a clear **GOAL** using the steps outlined in “How to be a successful self-manager”
- Choose exercise or activity that you want to do and that is **FUN**
- Set a **SPECIFIC TIME AND PLACE** to do your exercise
- Decide how long you are going to stick to the plan before you think about changing it (6 to 8 weeks is a good time to work on things)
- Keep an **EXERCISE DIARY** to keep track of how you are doing (there is one at the back of this booklet for you to use)
- **START NOW** – don’t wait!. Begin gradually and proceed slowly
- **REVISE YOUR PROGRAMME**. At the end of the 6 – 8 weeks make a new plan for the next 6 weeks
- **REWARD** yourself. It is a reward to feel better and healthier but also give yourself a reward for achieving your goal, like eating a favourite meal, or visiting a friend or taking a walk somewhere special.

### **Your exercise programme:**

An exercise programme should include the three different types of exercise; remember they were endurance, flexibility and strength exercise. Following the steps in the box “Steps to success with exercise”, you need to decide on what you want to be able to do and what exercise you would like to do. Now that you know what exercise you are going to do, you need to decide how much to do. The amount of exercise you are going to begin with will depend on a lot of different things. If you have not done any exercise for a long time or have been feeling unwell, have had difficulty breathing or been short of breath, if you have had stiffness or pain or weakness that interferes with your daily activities then you need to start your exercise slowly. You can begin slowly doing exercises every other day for 5 minutes. Once you can do that comfortably and without feeling stiff or sore the next day, increase it to 10 minutes. Once you can do 10 minutes comfortably, you can start doing the exercises every day (when we say exercise every day, we usually mean exercise for 5 days of the week; it can be very hard to keep a routine to exercise on weekends when activities are different). Once you can do at least 10 minutes every day then you are ready to begin endurance exercises. Choose your exercises from the ones set out in the sections below. Follow the instructions in the box to make sure you get the most out of the exercises and do them safely.

## Getting the most out of your flexibility and strength exercises:

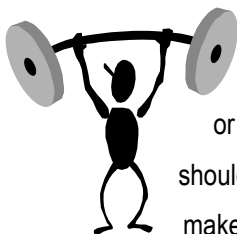
- Move slowly and gently. *Do not* use jerking or bouncing movements as these will make your muscles shorter and tighter.
- Stretch to the point of *tension* in a muscle and hold for 20 seconds before you relax
- Don't push until it hurts, *stretch to tension not pain*
- Start off with 5 repetitions of each exercise. After 1 week increase it to 7, after another week increase to 10.
- Always do the *same number* of exercises on the left side and the right side of your body
- *Keep breathing*; do not hold your breath when you exercise. Think about breathing out as you move to make sure you do not hold your breath.
- Use the *two hour rule*. If you have increased symptoms for more than two hours after you exercise you have probably done too much. Don't stop doing the exercises but decrease how much you do next time.
- If you find an exercise difficult this does not mean you should not do it at all. You should adapt it, do it as completely as you can.

### Flexibility Exercises:

Remember, these exercises are aimed at improving your ability to move. There is a long list of exercises that could be included here and you might not be able to do them all every time you exercise. Try to ensure that you do flexibility exercises at least once a week.



### Strengthening Exercises:



You do not need to go to a gym to do strength exercises, the exercises described here can be done at home. To make muscles stronger you must make them work against a resistance or a force – they have to push or pull. You should not do strength exercises every day, rather they should be done every second day. Your muscles need a day of rest to adapt and get stronger. To make a muscle stronger you need to repeat each exercise 5 times to start with. Once you can do an exercise 10 times you will not get stronger by doing more exercises. Now you will need to add more resistance to the exercise to get stronger.

### Endurance Exercises:

The most difficult thing for most people is deciding how much exercise to start with. The easiest starting point is to ask yourself the question: “how much do I think I can do without suffering for it tomorrow?” If you feel you can do 5 minutes, then do 5 minutes. Remember that any exercise is better than none. You don’t have to do 30 minutes from the first day. It is important to start slowly and increase very gradually. It is better to start off by doing less than you think you can and increase it from there.

There are three things you need to think about when you do endurance exercise. These three things are *frequency* (how often am I going to do this exercise); *duration* (how long am I going to exercise for when I do exercise) and *intensity* (how hard am I going to work when I exercise).



### **Frequency:**

Try to do endurance exercise 3 or 4 times a week. By doing this you can rest every second day and allow your body to recover. All athletes have at least one day a week when they rest. Rest does not mean that they lie in bed all day though, it means that they do not do their exercises.

### **Duration:**

How much can I do without suffering for it tomorrow? That is your starting point. If you are starting with just a few minutes you can gradually increase it over time until you can do 30 minutes at a time. The easiest way to increase the time is to use intervals of exercise. For example to walk hard for 3 minutes, then walk slowly for 2 minutes, then walk hard again for another 3 minutes. Slowly over time cut down the slow walking and increase the hard walking. You could also break your exercise into separate sessions. You could walk for 10 or 15 minutes in the morning and do it again in the evening. This would still count as 30 minutes of exercise.

### **Intensity:**

How will you know that you are exercising hard enough to be doing some good? How will you know if you are exercising too hard? When doing endurance exercise the easiest way to check the intensity is to use the “Talk Test”. When you are doing moderate intensity exercise you should be able to talk comfortably but if you tried to sing it would be a little difficult and you would have to stop singing to take bigger breaths. Moderate intensity means you should feel that you are breathing a little faster and a little harder but you can still talk. It may take you a while to find the right intensity for you for the whole of your exercise session. This is normal; take your time to get to know how your body will respond.

How will you know you are improving in your exercises? For the flexibility and strength exercises it is easy to feel the improvements as you will feel that moving is easier and you are stronger and can lift heavier items. For some people it is harder to know if you are improving with the endurance exercises. How do you know if you are improving?

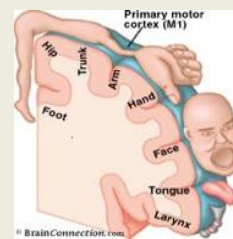
**A TIMED TEST** – One of the easiest tests to do to see if you are improving:

1. Decide on a route that you can walk near your home.
2. Walk this route at a moderate intensity and time how long it takes.
3. After several weeks of exercise walk the route again and time it again. You may see that you can walk the same route faster within 4 weeks, but it may take 8 to 12 weeks before you see that you can do the route in a faster time. The goal is to complete the same route faster or in the same time but at a lower intensity (breathing much easier).

Use the exercise diary at the end of each section to record your goals and your progress in achieving them.

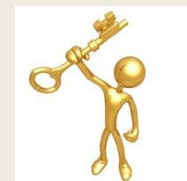
### What does exercise do for chronic pain?

- Slowly turns down the pain “volume brain button”:
  - so the danger messages don’t get sent so easily
  - less DIMs (Danger) and more SIMs (Safety in me) messages
    - – “I can move!”; “I can do things, even if it does hurt a bit”
- Helps your brain redraw its map of your body so that pain stops spreading
- Helps your brain find the keys so it can unlock the drug cabinet
  - morphine from your brain is 100x stronger than oral morphine medicine!



Exercise is powerful medicine for chronic pain, it is the key!

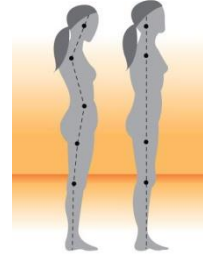
- If exercise is medicine, then what dose is enough to make a difference?
  - **To start: 20 minutes, 3 times a week**
  - **The goal: 150 minutes every week with exercise on most days!**



## An Exercise Routine

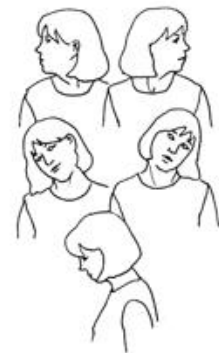
This is a 20 minute exercise routine which is safe for people living with chronic pain. This routine includes exercises which make you stronger (strength exercises), more flexible (stretching exercises) and fitter (endurance exercises).

1. Start by standing up straight and tall, feel your weight across your feet, relax your shoulders and open your chest, hold your head straight. Take a deep breath in and breathe out.



2. **Endurance:** Dance / March on the spot for 2 minutes. March at a steady pace – that is a pace which you can maintain for 2 minutes. Do not start fast and get slower or start slowly and get faster. Pace yourself, start and finish at the same speed. You should be marching so that you can feel you are breathing a little bit harder than normal, you should be able to talk but not be able to sing.

3. **Stretch:** Now stretch your neck – keep your shoulders relaxed and turn to look over your right shoulder – hold it for 20 seconds. Bring your head back to the middle, then turn to look over your left shoulder – hold it for 20 seconds and then bring your head back to the middle. Now put your left ear on your left shoulder - hold it for 20 seconds and then bring your head back to the middle. Repeat to the right. Now put your chin on your chest - hold it for 20 seconds and then bring your head back to the middle. Roll shoulders forwards 5 times, then roll your shoulders backwards 5 times.

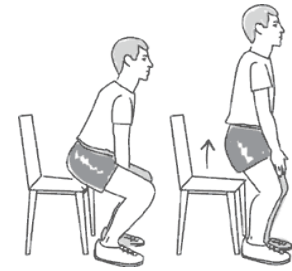


4. **Endurance:** Dance / March on the spot for 2 minutes – 30 steps normal, 30 steps lift your knees up as high as you can. Keep changing every 30 steps.

5. **Stretch:** Stretch your body – with your feet shoulder width apart, slide your right hand down your right leg so that you bend sideways. Bend as far as you can - hold it for 20 seconds and then stand up straight again. Repeat this to the left. Put your hands on your bottom; bend your body backwards as far as you can. Now bend forward and try to touch your toes.



6. **Strength:** Squats - Sit on a chair, then now stand up, keep sitting down and standing up for 2 minutes. Stand up and sit down at a steady pace – that is a pace which you can maintain for 2 minutes. Do not start fast and get slower or start slowly and get faster. Pace yourself, start and finish at the same speed.



7. **Strength:** Tummy crunches- Lie down on the floor with your knees bent and your arms crossed on your chest. Lift your head to put your chin on your chest, now lift your shoulders off the ground. Slowly lower down. Keep going for 2 minutes.



8. **Endurance:** Dance / March on the spot for 2 minutes – 30 steps normal, 30 steps lift your feet up as high as you can (try to kick your buttocks). Keep changing every 30 steps.

9. **Strength:** Lunges - Stand up straight. Take one big step forward with your right foot and bend your knees so that your left knee almost touches the ground (lunge). Push back with your right leg to bring your feet back together again. Repeat on the left. Do 10 lunges on each leg.

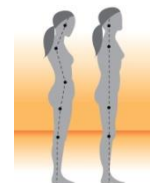


10. **Endurance:** March on the spot for 2 minutes – 30 steps normal, 30 steps lift your knees up as high as you can. Keep changing every 30 steps

11. **Stretch / Strengthen:** Kneeling on all fours (knees and hands)

- From “cat” to “cow” - gently round and arch the back
- Arm and leg lifts separately and then alternate arm and leg lifts
- Pose of a child kneeling back into prayer position and breathing
- Downward dog – lift knees off floor from 4 point kneeling and gently walk your heels alternately up and down as though you were walking with slightly bent knees.

12. Finish by standing up straight and tall, feel your weight across your feet, relax your shoulders and open your chest, hold your head straight. Take a deep breath in and breathe out.



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## Action Plan Form - Exercise

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Use this form to develop an action plan on exercise. What exercise would you like to do?

Be sure your action plan includes:

*What* you want to do

*How much* you are going to do

*When* you are going to do it

*How many* days a week you are going to do it

For example: This week, I will walk (*what*) around the block (*how much*) before lunch (*when*) three times (*how many*).

This week I will:

\_\_\_\_\_ (*what*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*how much*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*when*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*how many?*)

How confident are you that you can complete this action plan?

\_\_\_\_\_

Not at all												Totally
confident	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	confident	

Keep a record of how you did:

	I Plan to.....	I did.....
<b>Monday</b>		
<b>Tuesday</b>		
<b>Wednesday</b>		
<b>Thursday</b>		
<b>Friday</b>		
<b>Saturday</b>		
<b>Sunday</b>		

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## Week 3: Stress Management

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### STRESS and PAIN: the terrible twins!

#### What is stress?

Stress is a FEELING – of being tense and worried

#### Why?

Often due to a feeling of lack of control of the way things are.

When we FEEL stressed we may

- Be Irritable
- Struggle to concentrate or remember things
- Sleep poorly
- Eat poorly - too much or too little or unhealthily
- Struggle with relationships



In our society, we talk about stress a lot. We might say that it is stressful to live in South Africa. That it is stressful to worry about our children or our families, it is stressful to worry about money or it is stressful worrying about getting a job or coping with my job. The most common reason why we feel stressed is a lack of control. We tend to feel that things are stressful if we don't have any control over them. We feel stressed if we are going to be late for work because the trains are late – this is out of our control. We feel stressed about where we live if we don't feel safe there – those who commit crimes against us are also out of our control. In the same way, we may feel stressed when we have a chronic illness like chronic pain or diabetes or high blood pressure. If you feel that your illness is out of your control and there is nothing you can do to affect it, this makes you feel stressed.

**Some stress can be good?** Stress is not always bad. We know that stress can be useful too. For many people if we feel some stress, we might feel under pressure to perform better. You might feel stressed because your family is coming to visit, but this stress makes you tidy up your home – a good effect of the stress.

Sometimes we wish for a “stress-free” life. But, we know that if there was no stress in our lives, if we did not have to do anything all day long, this would not be good for us either. If I lay in bed all day and did not do anything, my muscles would get weak, my joints would get stiff and I would become ill. We need some stress in our lives to keep us healthy. The important thing is to keep the amount of stress at a level that we feel we can manage. This is why we talk about stress management, **not stress elimination!**

Stress and pain are like terrible twins. When we feel our pain is out of control, we feel stressed. When we feel our stress is out of control, what happens to pain?

### **How stressed we feel depends on:**

#### **1. *The stressful situation: Is it unexpected or unknown?***

Usually the less you expect the situation and the less familiar you are with a situation, the more stressful it will be. If you needed to take the train to work but you knew the day before that the trains would be late, this would be less stressful than finding out after you have got onto the train that it is going to be late. If you think about having pain, if you know the cause of the pain is it more or less stressful? If you don't know what is causing your pain and you are worrying that there is something seriously wrong, is this more or less stressful?



#### **2. *How you see the situation and how you cope with it:***

**Is it important? Do I have the tools to manage it?**

If the situation you are in is not important, you are likely to feel less stressed about it. If you are on a train which is going to be late, but you are going shopping on your own, then you are likely not to get so stressed about it. If you are on a train which is going to be late and you are going to work this might be more stressful, but if you have a cell phone with you and you have airtime on the cell phone and you telephone your boss to explain why you will be late, then this might be less stressful. Your ability to cope with the situation, affects the amount of stress you feel. While it is stressful to live with a chronic disease like chronic pain, diabetes or high blood pressure, if you thought you could cope with it and it would not interfere with your job and your life would it be more or less stressful? Having knowledge about your condition allows you to think about it in a different way and will change the way that you cope.

#### **3. *Support from family and friends: Am I alone?***



Friends and family who understand and support you will affect your levels of stress. Feeling alone and that you have no support will probably make you feel more stressed. If you think about living with chronic pain, would it be more or less stressful if there were no one to support you? But, we do need to be careful about support from family and friends. If they take over doing everything for us (because they care about us and are trying to help), we might feel useless and as if we don't have a purpose. Support does not mean doing everything for me.

Stress is not just the things that happen to us. The amount of stress that we feel depends on a lot of different things which can change every day. There are many different things we can do to manage stress every day.

## Managing Stress: Dealing with the cause of stress



### 1. Why am I stressed? What is stressing me?

The first step in dealing with stress is to identify *why* you are feeling this way. Use the self-management steps to help you identify the problem. Once you know why you are feeling this way then you need to decide what you can do about it. Sometimes dealing with the things that stress us is easy, if you are friends with your neighbours and the noise from their television is irritating you it might be easy to ask them to turn down the volume. If you are not friends with your neighbours, or you are very shy it might be quite difficult to ask them to turn down the volume. Sometimes we can identify the things that stress us and do something about it. But, often we either cannot deal with it or it is out of our control. If you cannot deal with it or it is out of your control, the next step is to change the way you are looking at the problem.

### 2. Look at the problem differently

The second step is to look at the problem in a different way. Think about how you are feeling. Are your thoughts and feelings about the problem inaccurate? Maybe you are very worried about your health, this is stressing you. Are you worried that you will be very ill and unable to work soon? Are these thoughts and feelings accurate? On what information are you basing these thoughts and feelings? Have you spoken to experts about your health or are you basing your thoughts and feelings and stress on poor information?

### 3. Make a plan / set SMART goals

Yes - plan your life. Do you get stressed by the same things over and over again? Or do you find yourself getting stressed because there are times when your life is very busy? If you are doing the same things over and over and getting stressed, you might want to look at how you are dealing with it and see if you can try a different plan. What about a busy life? This is also about planning, being very busy and having no time for ourselves, can be very stressful. Plan things over time carefully, make sure you have time to at least do some relaxation or exercise even when you are very busy. Do not leave things for the last minute.



#### 4. Get HELP from friends / people you trust

Family and friends and support groups are a great way to decrease stress. If we want support from people though, we have to tell them clearly what the problem is and what we would like from them. Often we do not communicate clearly and this might make the stress worse! If you find your family or friends are not very helpful or supportive, it might be worth sitting down with them when you are not feeling stressed to talk about these things. It might be that they see things differently to you, this does not mean they are right and you are wrong, or that you are right and they are wrong. It just means that you see things differently and you can discuss how to handle things better. If having a discussion like this is difficult, it might be useful to ask a counsellor to help with the conversation. You can ask for assistance at a clinic or you can go to an NGO like FAMSA who specialise in family and relationship counselling.



#### 5. ACT: choose an action

There are many actions that can help with managing stress. Find your favourite ways to relax: such as gardening, listening to your best music, reading a fun book, having tea with a friend, praying, meditating, breathing in nature. Be courageous and try out some new ways too.

#### Relaxation/Mindfulness/Meditation

When we feel relaxed, we feel calm. Sometimes if we are relaxed and we are tired, we might feel sleepy. At other times we might feel relaxed and alert and be able to concentrate calmly on tasks. Relaxation can help us to concentrate and it can help us to unwind and go to sleep. Relaxation is a very useful way to manage stress and some of the symptoms of chronic diseases such as pain.

If we are stressed, this can make our muscles tense, our hearts beat faster and we breathe faster, if we are also feeling unwell and have pain we will feel worse. Relaxation can decrease the tension in muscles and slow down our hearts and breathing and help to make us feel better. If we are stressed we often become irritable and moody,



relaxation helps to calm you and make you feel more in control of your life. When we are stressed sometimes it is difficult to fall asleep as we are worrying about things out of our control, if you are also unwell, not sleeping will make you feel worse. Relaxation will help you get to sleep, this will help manage your stress and improve your health.

Just like learning to play a new sport or doing exercise, relaxation takes practice. The specific way that you relax doesn't matter; the important thing is to practice it regularly. Once you get good at relaxation, you can relax in a crowded waiting room, on a train or a taxi. You can do relaxation anywhere!

### **Good times to practice relaxing are when:**

- You feel you are getting tense or irritable or you are worried
- You feel you are in pain
- You want to go to sleep



*Can you see how relaxation will help to calm down the nervous system – so it's a good idea for people with chronic pain whose nervous system is sensitive!*

## Sleep

**If you don't sleep well, what happens to your pain?**

**And if your pain is severe, how easy is it to sleep?**

**Paying attention to sleep is an important part of treating pain!**



People with chronic pain often struggle to sleep because

1. They are stressed and worried about their condition
2. They worry about what this means for them, for their family, for their future
3. The pain itself feels worse at night
4. Sometimes they feel so tired they can't sleep
5. They struggle to get to sleep and only fall asleep very late at night, others find that they fall asleep but then wake up during the night and can't get back to sleep. Some people find it difficult to sleep at all at night and sleep during the day.

Sleep is very important to keep healthy. We all need different and need different amounts of sleep. Some people only need 5 hours, whilst others need 8 - 10 hours of sleep a night. We have been learning how to fall asleep and sleep well since we were babies. If you do not sleep well, following these steps will help you to learn how to fall asleep and sleep well. Remember that like learning anything new, this will take time. It might take up to 3 months to learn to sleep well if you have been struggling with sleep for a while.

## Suggestions for Improving Sleep

1. *Have a bedtime routine:* try to go to bed at around the same time every night and always do the same things before getting into bed. A bedtime routine could be to lock the house, get undressed, wash your face, clean your teeth, get into bed and do a relaxation session.
2. *You can't sleep because of worrying:* write down your problems or the things that are worrying you, then write down the next step that you think could help sort out the problem. If you wake up during the night worrying about the problem, remind yourself that you've gone over it and you have a plan. If you wake up with a new worry, write down that problem to deal with in the morning. Practice your relaxation to take your mind off the worry. If you still can't sleep, it may be better to get up and do something relaxing like reading, watching TV, listening to relaxing music or doing relaxation.
3. *Your bed and bedroom are for sleeping / relaxing:* try not to use your bedroom during the day. Do not watch TV in bed. If you are not asleep within 30 minutes of going to bed, get up and do something else. Do not lie in bed and worry that you have not fallen asleep. This will only make you feel stressed and lessen the chance of falling asleep.
4. *Have a morning routine:* get up at the same time every day, even if you don't feel like it. Our bodies like to work on regular patterns to fall asleep and get up at the same time every day.
5. *Avoid drinks containing caffeine* for at least 6 hours before going to sleep (drinks like coke, tea or coffee).
6. *Never use alcohol to help you sleep.* It might make you feel relaxed at first, but once this wears off it is likely to make you feel jumpy and you are likely to wake up during the night.



### **Good SLEEP habits /hygiene**

**S** – *SET a time to go to bed AND to wake*  
- *SUN (a little) on your skin during the day helps you sleep at night*  
- *SCREEN time: Limit AND put device onto night light (red/orange. NOT BLUE)*

**L** – *reLAX: meditate, read, music,*

**E** – *ELIMINATE: day naps, kids/dogs from bed, e-mails, pm caffeine, alcohol, beverages, smoking, certain medications*

**E** – *EXERCISE during the day (in the sun / in nature?)*

**P** – *PREPARE: dark, quiet, cool place. Memo pad to PARK ideas, PERSIST – keep trying!*

## Exercise

Exercise is a very effective way of managing stress. People who exercise regularly doing at least 20 to 30 minutes of exercise, 3-5 times a week have less risk of suffering from stress related illnesses. Go back to the section on exercise for more on how to exercise safely and effectively.

### **Exercise is the key:**

- Decreases stress
- Helps us sleep better
- Makes us healthy and decreases our chances of developing other illnesses
- And of course is one of our best ways to treat chronic pain as it resets the sensitive nerves turning down their volume, unlocks the drug cabinet in the brain and helps the brain to redraw its maps!

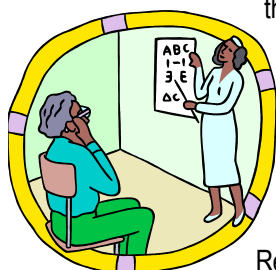


## Communicating with your health carer

Anyone living with a long term health problem, whether it is chronic pain or high blood pressure or diabetes will have to visit their clinic regularly. Visiting the clinic regularly can be stressful because it takes time, you have to plan ahead, you might not be sure how long you are going to have to wait, you might be worrying about what the health carers are going to tell you. One of the most important ways of managing the stress associated with visiting clinics and seeing health carers is to think about and plan how to communicate with them.



When visiting the clinic to see a health care practitioner it is important that you feel comfortable asking questions (any questions, even if you feel they are “silly” or “stupid” questions) and comfortable expressing how you feel. It is also important that you feel you can negotiate your treatment with your health care provider so that both you and



the carer feel that you are receiving the best care for you. It is important that you not feel that your health care provider is ignoring you, “puts you down” or treats you like a child. We know that doctors and nurses have a lot of patients to see and they have little time to spend with each person. One helpful way to make sure that you get the most out of your appointments with the doctor or nurse is for you to take PART – Prepare, Ask, Repeat, Take action.

### **Take PART:**

#### **Prepare:**

Before your appointment at a clinic it is important to prepare. Think about the reason for your appointment and whether there are any issues in particular that are worrying you. Write down your questions or the things that are worrying you. You need to be realistic about the list you write down, there will probably only be time to answer one or two of the things on your list. Make sure the most important problems are at the top of the list. Take your list with you to your clinic appointment, then when the doctor or nurse asks if there is anything you want to ask, you can use your list.

If there are particular symptoms or health issues you want to discuss, prepare for your appointment by writing down specific information the doctor or nurse will want to know. Things that are helpful are: when did it start, how long do the symptoms last, where are they in your body, what makes you feel better or worse, have you had a problem like this before and how was it treated; have you changed anything such as your diet, exercise, medicines. If you have already received treatment for a problem, be ready to report back on how well it has worked, or on whether it has not worked at all.



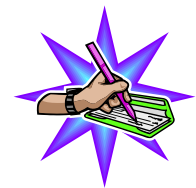
Be open about how you are feeling and about the things that are worrying you. The more open you are, the more the health care provider can help you. Finally, give feedback. If you don't like the way you have been treated you can tell the doctor or nurse. If you do not want to tell them directly then you can speak to someone else in the clinic or to someone in a support group. Remember too that doctors and nurses and other health care providers also appreciate being complimented. If you feel that you have been treated well and are happy with your treatment, it is acceptable to compliment the health carer.



### **Ask:**

Another important step in having good communication and decreasing stress is to ask questions. Having good information is essential to you being successful in self-managing your health. Ask questions about your diagnosis such as what is wrong, what has caused it, is it contagious and what is going to happen now? Then ask questions if you have had tests, what is the test for; what if I don't have the test and what will the test involve? Remember to ask questions about your treatment options, what are the benefits of treatment and what are the risks and side effects? Finally ask questions about follow-up, when should you return to the clinic, what should you watch out for and what should you do next?

If you find you have difficulty remembering information it is a good idea to write things down during your visit. Or you could ask someone you trust to come to the appointment with you to help with remembering.



### **Repeat:**

One of the important things to do to help with remembering things is to repeat it. So if the nurse or doctor explains something to you, repeat back to them in your own words what you have understood. This is very useful to make sure there are no misunderstandings.

### **Take Action:**

At the end of your appointment, it is important that you know exactly what you will need to do next. It might be that you need to make another appointment, or that you need to go home and change something or get new medicine from the pharmacy. Make sure that you are clear about what you need to do next, and then do it!

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# Relaxation

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*Relaxation takes practice! Try to do it every day!*

*10 minutes a day can make a big difference!*

*Find a comfortable spot and close your eyes*

*Take three deep breathes in and out*

*Gradually relax your body from top to bottom (or bottom to top)*

*If you get distracted...just breathe again*

*Or you can follow the long relaxation:*

Find a comfortable position. Lie on your back or sit in a chair with your back supported.

Place your hands at your sides, palms up.

Close your eyes if you wish.

Now begin to become aware of your breathing..... Focus on slowing down the rhythm of your breathing.....

Your chest and tummy will expand outward with each breath, like a balloon gently filling with air....

Imagine your ribcage moving out to the sides when you breathe in.... and gently inward as you breathe out....

Slowly take a deep breath in.... Pause for a moment.... and then slowly breathe out. Let the tension melt away as you relax more deeply with each breath...

Continue breathing slowly and gently....

Now think about the top of your head. Feel the skin on the top of your head beginning to relax, and spreading slowly downwards....

Even your ears are becoming relaxed and heavy.... Feel your eyebrows resting....

Your forehead is becoming relaxed and smooth....all the lines on your face are becoming smooth..

Let your jaw relax by allowing your mouth to be slightly open.... Allow your tongue to relax...

Feel your throat relaxing.... relax your cheeks, nose, and eyes.... Feel your eyelids becoming very heavy.... and very relaxed.... more and more relaxed....

Enjoy the feeling of relaxation you are experiencing.

Now think about your neck.... allow a feeling of relaxation to begin at the top of your neck, and flow downward...

Feel the relaxation as your shoulders become relaxed and loose.... Let your shoulders gently sink downward.... as they become relaxed.... and heavy.... very heavy.... and very relaxed.... deeper and deeper.... relaxed....

Feel your collar bones becoming relaxed as your shoulders move gently back, and your chest widens slightly....

Allow all the muscles in your shoulders to feel smooth... and relaxed.... as the muscles give up their hold completely...

Notice your breathing once again... see how regular it has become... continue to take slow.... smooth.... deep breaths... Breathe in the feeling of relaxation... and breathe out any tension... your breathing allows you to become more and more relaxed.... deeply relaxed..... Now turn your attention to your right arm..... Feel the relaxation flowing down from your right shoulder.... allow your upper arm to relax... your elbow.... lower arm... and wrist become loose and relaxed....

Enjoy the feeling of relaxation as the muscles of your right arm give up their hold.... Feel the relaxation flowing into your hand... Let all the tension drain out of each finger tip and flow away.... the relaxation spreads to your thumb... index finger.... middle finger... ring finger... and little finger....

Feel the relaxation flowing down your left arm... Let the muscles of the left upper arm relax.... Relax your elbow.... lower arm.... and wrist....

Enjoy the feeling of relaxation you are experiencing.

Let the tension melt away.... imagine the tension flowing right out of your finger tips... Allow your left hand to relax completely.... relax your thumb... index finger.... middle finger... ring finger... and little finger....

Both of your arms are now totally relaxed... allow them to be free and limp... pleasantly relaxed...

Enjoy the feeling of relaxation you are experiencing...

Allow the feeling of relaxation to continue to your chest and stomach....feel the relaxation there... becoming deeper with each breath....

Now turn your attention to your upper back... Feel the relaxation flow down your spine... Let all the muscles give up their hold.... relax your upper back... middle and lower back.... allow your back to relax completely..... Feel the relaxation in your whole upper body ....

Relax more deeply with each breath.... more and more relaxed.... deeply relaxed and calm....

Let your hip muscles relax.... Relax all the way from your buttocks (bottom), down the back of your thighs... relax the muscles on the front of your thighs...Feel the relaxation in your upper legs moving down to your knees... your calves and shins.... your ankles.... and your feet.... allow all the muscles to relax and go limp....

Allow any last bits of tension to flow right out of the soles of your feet....Feel the relaxation flowing through your body... From the top of your head... down to the bottoms of your feet... become more relaxed with each breath.... enjoy the feeling of total relaxation.....

You are now as relaxed as you want to be.... Experience the feeling of deep relaxation... enjoy the feeling.... relaxed.... calm..... at peace

Focus on the feeling of relaxation throughout your body.... Notice your breathing.... Your relaxed muscles.... Your calm thoughts... Memorize this feeling so you can re-create this relaxed state whenever you wish....

Enjoy relaxing for a few moments more....

When you are ready to return to your day, reawaken your body slowly... gently move your muscles... roll your shoulders slowly forward.... then slowly backward.... lean your head gently to the left... return to centre.... lean your head gently to the right... turn your head...

Wriggle your fingers and toes....

Gently open your eyes.... Feeling alert... calm.... and full of energy.

*Or try the short relaxation:*

Deep breathing not only helps to cure anxiety and stress, it also triggers relaxation. Here's how to breathe deeply.

Breathe in slowly to the count of four (count slowly; to the pace of one-one-thousand, two-one-thousand....).

Pause to the count of three.

Breathe out slowly to the count of five.

The breathing process goes like this:

Inhale... two, three, four...pause...two, three....exhale...two, three, four five....

Inhale... two, three, four...pause...two, three....exhale...two, three, four five....

Repeat for a minute or two.

## Relaxation applications which you might find helpful:

1. CALM – 7 days of CALM is free. You can download this from your smartphone app store.
2. Mindfulness.org
3. Headspace
4. And many many more – just google it!

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## Action Plan Form – Stress Management

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Think about one thing that is causing you stress. Use this action plan form to come up with a plan of how to manage your stress this week.

Be sure your action plan includes:

*What* you want to do

*How much* you are going to do

*When* you are going to do it

*How many* days a week you are going to do it

For example: This week, I will walk (*what*) around the block (*how much*) before lunch (*when*) three times (*how many*).

This week I will:

\_\_\_\_\_ (*what*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*how much*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*when*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*how many?*)

How confident are you that you can complete this action plan?

\_\_\_\_\_

Not at all										Totally	
confident	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	confident

Keep a record of how you did:

	I Plan to.....	I did.....
<b>Monday</b>		
<b>Tuesday</b>		
<b>Wednesday</b>		
<b>Thursday</b>		
<b>Friday</b>		
<b>Saturday</b>		
<b>Sunday</b>		

# Exercise Diary

Use this exercise diary to keep track of your exercise goals and activities.

Start off by writing down your goal.

Write down here what you want to be able to do: \_\_\_\_\_

Now, what do you want to be able to do this week which will help you to reach your goal?

Remember from your action plan to include:

*What* you want to do

*How much* you are going to do

*When* you are going to do it

*How many* days a week you are going to do it



For example: This week, I will walk (*what*) around the block (*how much*) before lunch (*when*) three times (*how many*).

This week I will:

\_\_\_\_\_ (*what*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*how much*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*when*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*how many?*)

	<b>Exercise Planned</b>	<b>Exercise I did...</b>	<b>How did I feel? Do you need to change anything?</b>
<b>e.g.</b>	<i>20 mins in a.m. after breakfast and in p.m. after supper</i>		<i>Very tired by the second session, I'm going to cut it down to morning only for this week.</i>
<b>Monday</b>			
<b>Tuesday</b>			
<b>Wednesday</b>			
<b>Thursday</b>			
<b>Friday</b>			

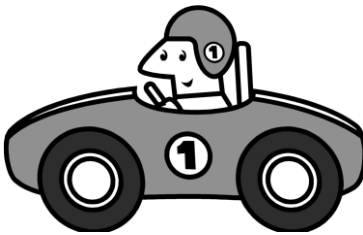
## Week 4: Eating Well

When we eat a balanced diet we feel better, sleep better, we have more energy and we are happier.

Why is that? \_\_\_\_\_ We have a choice?

If we think of our body as a car we can either fill up with petrol or diesel. Consider the 2 options:

### FORMULA 1 RACE CAR



Formula 1 race car runs on high octane (“energy”) petrol, goes very fast but not for very long and then they stop! It needs lots of servicing and are expensive to run. It doesn’t have a long life span and often crashes. Similarly, “petrol” type food or drink is unhealthy and makes our blood sugar levels jump from high to low all day. It is a diet high in sugar, salt, processed foods, fast foods, fried foods, sugary drinks, fizzy drinks, caffeine, alcohol. This diet creates more inflammation and pain in our bodies and is linked to developing diseases like high blood pressure, heart attacks, diabetes and strokes.

So how do I run my car on diesel?



### DIESEL CAR

© 123RF.com



Diesel cars run on a lower octane (“energy”) fuel. It may not be as fast but it can go and go and go at a steady pace. It is safe, sturdy and strong. Similarly, “diesel” type food or drink is healthy and makes our blood sugar levels stable so that we can keep a constant pace throughout the day and not get tired, reduce inflammation and pain in our bodies

Examples of diesel food:

Food in its most natural form from the plant or animal like fruit fresh or dried, raw nuts / seeds, vegetables raw or cooked, whole grains like rice, lentils, beans, oats, unprocessed meat, eggs, fish – fresh or tinned. Water or herbal tea.

1. Is the food in it’s most natural form from the plant, ground, tree, animal or fish?
2. Is it unprocessed?
3. Is it NOT fast food, NOT fried, and have NO added sugar / salt?
4. Is it water or herbal uncaffeinated tea?

A healthy diet includes foods which give us energy for long periods of time. Write down here some of the good foods we discuss:

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What are some of the unhealthy foods you eat which might give you energy for short periods of time but aren't good for you? Write down here some of the things you learn about food in our discussions:

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What about sugar and caffeine? Might these affect pain? Write down here how much sugar and caffeine you have every day. Might it be worth changing this? Remember sugar makes us feel better for a short period of time but it quickly runs out, and when it runs out, we feel tired, and when we feel tired, pain gets worse!!! And caffeine? It is very similar, and not only that but it also affects the quality of our sleep, so we get even more tired! So, write down here your thoughts about your sugar and caffeine, what could you change?

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### *“I find it hard to eat well!”*

Now that you know what you should be eating let's talk about why people living with **persistent pain** may be struggling to eat enough. The reasons for not eating enough could be that they do not want to eat because they just don't feel hungry or because they are too tired to eat or they are too worried to eat or they feel like they will vomit if they eat, or food just doesn't taste good any more. The next section gives ideas on ways to manage these problems.

### *“I'm not hungry”*

On the days when you do feel like eating, make sure you eat well to make up for days when you might not be eating so well. On the days when you do not feel like eating try to eat small meals more often, maybe 6 times a day. Eat in a relaxing place, maybe with a friend. Keep small snacks (healthy) with you in your bag or next to your bed so that if you wake up or suddenly feel hungry you can eat straight away. Make sure these snacks have lots of energy in them (are complex carbs). Make sure you have your favourite foods to eat, even if it's just a little bit, it helps.

### *“I get full too quickly”*

You might be trying to get all your food at one meal. Try to spread it out more by eating five or six times a day. When you do eat, make sure it is food with lots of energy and protein. Don't eat foods without energy first and then feel too full for the important foods.

### *“Food doesn't taste so good”*

Medicines can change the way food tastes. Sometimes you may have a bitter taste or a taste of metal in your mouth. Try cleaning your teeth and your tongue before you eat. If you have a taste of metal in your mouth, try to drink orange juice or another tart drink.

### *“My mouth is dry”*

A dry mouth might be a side effect of medications. You can help this by avoiding smoking and drinking alcohol as well as sugary drinks as these irritate your mouth and throat and make you even thirstier. Eat softer food, if you mash your food or make soup as this will be easier to swallow. Try not to eat food with a lot of spices or drink fizzy drinks. Keep a bottle of water next to your bed so that you can drink during the night.



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## Action Plan Form

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Think about your eating habits. Use this form to come up with a plan to improve **one** thing about your nutrition.

Be sure your action plan includes:

*What* you want to do

*How much* you are going to do

*When* you are going to do it

*How many* days a week you are going to do it

For example: This week, I will walk (*what*) around the block (*how much*) before lunch (*when*) three times (*how many*).

This week I will:

\_\_\_\_\_ (*what*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*how much*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*when*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*how many?*)

How confident are you that you can complete this action plan?

\_\_\_\_\_

Not at all												Totally
confident	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10	confident

Keep a record of how you did:

	I Plan to.....	I did.....
<b>Monday</b>		
<b>Tuesday</b>		
<b>Wednesday</b>		
<b>Thursday</b>		
<b>Friday</b>		
<b>Saturday</b>		
<b>Sunday</b>		

# Exercise Diary

Keep using the exercise diary to keep track of your exercise goals from week one. You may want to start increasing your exercise plan.

Start off by writing down your goal.

Write down here what you want to be able to do: \_\_\_\_\_

Now, what do you want to be able to do this week which will help you to reach your goal?

Remember from your action plan to include:

*What* you want to do

*How much* you are going to do

*When* you are going to do it

*How many* days a week you are going to do it



For example: This week, I will walk (*what*) around the block (*how much*) before lunch (*when*) three times (*how many*).

This week I will:

\_\_\_\_\_ (*what*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*how much*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*when*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*how many?*)

	Exercise Planned	Exercise I did...	How did I feel? Do you need to change anything?
e.g.	20 mins in a.m. after breakfast and in p.m. after supper		Very tired by the second session, I'm going to cut it down to morning only for this week.
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			

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## Week 5: Medication

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I am so tired of “popping pills” and I have no idea what it’s for! I don’t even think they are working!

Pain is a complicated thing and so we use many kinds of drugs to help turn down the volume button. The medications are not designed to take the pain away but they do help to reduce the intensity of pain. We will often start treatment with many medications and then reduce them over time as you get better at using all the other tools you have learnt about on this course



The medications are fall into one of four categories.

1. Analgesic Drugs
2. Anti-Inflammatory Drugs
3. Anti-spasmodic Drugs
4. Antidepressants and Antiepileptic Drugs.

### 1. Analgesic drugs

“*Anal*” in “analgesic” means “no” and “*gesic*” mean “pain.” In other words they are “painkillers.” There are 3 main types of analgesic drugs.

#### *Mild Pain Killers*

These Painkillers don’t treat the cause but they work on the nerve and tell the nerve to stop sending danger messages. I.e. they tell the nerve to shut up! This is exactly what is needed for people with Chronic pain, because the original cause of the pain has healed and it is the nerves that are sensitive.

Examples of these drugs:

- Panado
- Grandpa
- Disprin/Asprin
- Panadol
- Calpol
- Panaleve

### *Opioid Analgesics (Morphine drugs)*

These drugs are a lot stronger than the normal pain killers. They are similar to the morphine that your own brain produces – we often call them Opiates...Hence Opioid Analgesics. These drugs work straight on the nerves of the brain and spinal cord and help to turn down the volume knob (like putting cotton wool in an ear!).

Because these drugs are mimicking what your own body does, they can produce dependence\* and tolerance\*. Other side effects include constipation and difficulty urinating.



Examples of these drugs:

- Morphine
- Fentanyl
- Methadone
- Pethidine
- Tramaset/tramadol
- Codeine

### *Painkillers + Codeine*

These drugs are a combination between the Mild Pain Killers and the Opioid Analgesics. They are stronger than the Mild Pain killers but weaker than the Opioid Analgesics. Anything with a “co” or a “codein” added to the name will fall into this category.

For Example:

- Panado Co

## 2. Anti-inflammatory drugs

These drugs reduce inflammation. Inflammation is the body's response to injury. For example when you twist your ankle, it will go hot and red and become swollen. These are signs of inflammation. Like pain, inflammation can be acute or chronic. Acute inflammation lasts only for a few days, whereas chronic inflammation lasts longer. Anti-inflammatory drugs treat both acute and chronic inflammation. Unlike analgesics they treat the cause; Anti-inflammatory drugs help to decrease the heat, redness and swelling. There are 2 types of Anti-inflammatory drugs.

### *Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).*

These drugs are commonly used for pain relief. However these drugs also have negative effects on the stomach and digestive system. They can cause constipation, ulceration in the stomach and even bleeding in the stomach. It is therefore important to take NSAIDs with or after food. With Chronic pain it is also important that you take them regularly for them to be effective.

Examples of these drugs are:

- Ibuprofen
- Brufen
- Voltaren
- Aspirin/Disprin
- Paracetamol
- Pyroxicam
- Betacin
- Naproxen
- Ketoprofen



Sometimes doctors will combine Anti-inflammatory drugs with Mild Pain Killers because they work better together than each on its own. Some pills come with them already together in one pill.

### **Steroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs**

These drugs are made to mimic natural steroids that your body produces. They are very strong anti-inflammatories; however there are negative affects of short term and long term use. In the long term it can cause high blood pressure, high blood sugar levels, eye problems, fragile skin, osteoporosis and muscle wasting. Steroidal injections have fewer side effects than orally taken Steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

Examples are:

- Cortisone
- Cortisol

### **3. Anti-spasmodic drugs**

When a person is in pain, their muscles become very tense and can often spasm. These drugs are used to relieve the spasm. We only use these drugs in very specific cases as they are very strong and have serious side effects

Examples are:

- Diazepam
- Baclofen

### **4. Antidepressant & antiepileptic drugs**

The brain is very sensitive to chemicals therefore, there is something called a Blood-Brain Barrier, which filters all the blood going to the brain to make sure there are no chemicals in the blood that would harm the brain. Because of this, many drugs cannot reach the brain. Antidepressants and Antiepileptic drugs are able to pass through the barrier and act on the brain. You remember all the changes to the nerves that happen in the brain in a person with Chronic pain? These drugs can help to normalise the chemicals in the brain so that the nerves which have become sensitive and overactive can calm down – instead of shouting at each other, the nerves can talk to each other as the chemicals they need to be able to talk are restored by these drugs. These drugs are given to Chronic Pain patients in much smaller doses than they would be for someone with depression or epilepsy.

It is important that these drugs are taken regularly and for at least 2 weeks before they begin to be effective. Side effects can include: scratchy eyes, drowsiness, dry mouth, constipation and blurred vision. But these side effects should decrease with time.

Examples are:

- **Antidepressants:**
  - Tricyclic antidepressants
    - Amitriptyline (Trepilline)
  - SSRIs (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors): This means that it increases the concentrations of the neurotransmitter serotonin in the body and brain which helps with anxiety and depression.
    - Fluoxetine (Prozac)
    - Escitalopram (Cipralex, Cilift, Zytomil, Lexapro)
    - Sertraline (Zoloft)
  - SNRIs (Serotonin and Norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors): This means that it increases the concentrations of the neurotransmitters serotonin and norepinephrine in the body and the brain which may be even more helpful in the treatment of chronic pain.
    - Venlafaxine (e.g. Effexor)
    - Duloxetine (e.g. Cymbalta)
  
- **Antiepileptics** are often used to treat Neuropathic Pain
  - Gabapentin (e.g. Neurontin)
  - Pregabalin (e.g. Lyrica)
  - Carbamazepine (Tegretol)
  - Sodium valproate – for migraine headaches

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## Action Plan Form

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Think about how you use the medication you have been given. Use this form to come up with a plan to improve **one** thing about your use of your medication.

Be sure your action plan includes:

*What* you want to do

*How much* you are going to do

*When* you are going to do it

*How many* days a week you are going to do it

For example: This week, I will walk (*what*) around the block (*how much*) before lunch (*when*) three times (*how many*).

This week I will:

\_\_\_\_\_ (*what*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*how much*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*when*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*how many?*)

How confident are you that you can complete this action plan?

\_\_\_\_\_

Not at all											Totally
confident	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	confident

Keep a record of how you did:

	I Plan to.....	I did.....
<b>Monday</b>		
<b>Tuesday</b>		
<b>Wednesday</b>		
<b>Thursday</b>		
<b>Friday</b>		
<b>Saturday</b>		
<b>Sunday</b>		

# Exercise Diary

Keep using the exercise diary to keep track of your exercise goals from week one. You may want to start increasing your exercise plan.

Start off by writing down your goal.

Write down here what you want to be able to do: \_\_\_\_\_

Now, what do you want to be able to do this week which will help you to reach your goal?

Remember from your action plan to include:

*What* you want to do

*How much* you are going to do

*When* you are going to do it

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For example: This week, I will walk (*what*) around the block (*how much*) before lunch (*when*) three times (*how many*).

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\_\_\_\_\_ (*what*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*how much*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*when*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*how many?*)

	Exercise Planned	Exercise I did...	How did I feel? Do you need to change anything?
e.g.	20 mins in a.m. after breakfast and in p.m. after supper		Very tired by the second session, I'm going to cut it down to morning only for this week.
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Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			

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## Week 6: Continuing as a Successful Self-Manager

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Over the last six weeks you have learnt many skills which will help you to live positively and recover with your condition. Research tells us that people living with any chronic disease who follow these steps have better quality of life, have fewer sick days and have better disease control. This is true for people living with chronic pain, high blood pressure, cancer or depression. You have learnt how to be a positive self-manager by being able to solve problems and set goals for yourself so that you can move forward with your life. You have learnt about the importance of exercise. How exercise can make you feel better, what exercises you should do and you have been doing those exercises too! You have learnt about pain, what might be causing pain and how to treat and manage any pain you may have. You have learnt about stress and relaxation techniques to manage it. You have learnt about food and eating well and how to make sure that your food is safe. With all of these you have also had the chance to practice doing things differently and to think about how this has made you feel.

### Action Planning for the Future

Now it is time to think about the future. People with long term illnesses often worry about what will happen if they get very sick, how they will manage their lives; how they will they look after themselves or their families. Worrying about these things can also make people feel sad, angry or depressed and helpless. These emotions may make everything feel even more difficult than they are. By working through this book you have already started to deal with these emotions. You have increased your knowledge and this is one of the main ways that we manage fear. If we are afraid of something, knowing more about it helps us to tackle the fear. If you know more about it, you can make a plan around it and making a plan helps us to get a sense of control over the very thing that we are afraid of.

Planning for the future means thinking about the things that might happen to you in the future and planning for them. You may never ever need to use the plan as the things that you worry about may not happen, but, having a plan will help you to worry less about these things and stay in control should they happen. You can use the action planning forms you have been using in this workbook to think about the things which worry you about the future. You can then start making a plan about what you want to do if these things happen. If you are not sure about making a plan, you may want to talk to different people who might be able to help you with this.



**Step 1:**

To be able to plan for the future, you need to decide *what* it is that you are worried about happening. This can be the hardest step to think about. For example you might be feeling very sad and depressed. First you need to think about why you are feeling that way. It might be that you are worried about not being able to look after your family if you become ill, or you may be worried about making someone else ill, or you may be worried about not being able to look after yourself, or you may be worried about dying. Once you have identified what it is that worries you and makes you feel sad, depressed, angry or afraid then you can start to make a plan to deal with it. This will help you to feel less sad, depressed, angry or afraid.

Write down here some of the things that might happen in the future that you worry about:

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



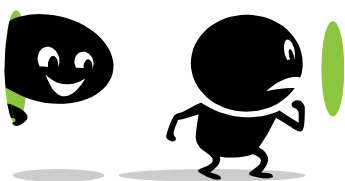
**Step 2:**

Now that you have identified some of the things which worry you, you can start to think about different ways to manage these things. If you were worried about becoming ill and not being able to look after yourself, write down a list of things that you would need help with. Then write down who you could ask to help you with those things. The people who can help might be family, friends, social workers, counsellors, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists or doctors. If you are not sure who could help you, you may want to talk to someone you trust to help you identify who could help.

Write down here three different things you could do to help plan for the things in the future that you worry about:

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

There are many organisations and people who you can approach for help in planning for the future. These organisations could include the Family and Marriage Society of South Africa (FAMSA), your church, as well as the health care practitioners at your local clinic.



Once you have completed Step 2 and written down three different things you could do to help plan for the things in the future that you worry about, choose the one which seems to suit you the best (this might be one which is easier or is cheaper or you know has worked for someone else). Now use this action plan form to work out what you will do if the thing which you worry about happening should happen. You can use this method to plan for any of the things which worry you.

**Action Plan Form for Future Worries**

I am worried that in the future I will not be able to:

---



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My plan to manage this if it happens is to:

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---

(what, who, how, when?)



How confident are you that you can complete this action plan? (remember you are aiming for 7 out of 10 on the confidence line)

Not at all											Totally
confident	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	confident



## Volunteering

Research shows that not only does your act of volunteering help others, but it helps you personally! The health benefits may include lessening symptoms of depression, more life satisfaction and sense of well being. Volunteering connects us with others and creates a sense of community. The unique satisfaction that comes from volunteer work can be gained in little more than an hour or two per week and can have a huge effect on how you see yourself, how you move through the world. You flourish even after the act of volunteering has finished.

WoW – Western Cape on Wellness: <https://www.westerncape.gov.za/westerncape-on-wellness/>

Wow is a healthy lifestyles partnership initiative of the Western Cape Government. As a graduate of the Pain Education Empowerment Programme you have unique life experience and skills that could be very valuable to your community. WoW offers a Championship training programme of 3 days for free, to equip you with equipment and skills to run your own activity club as a volunteer to your community. Visit the website for more details and to join the whatsapp group with regular tips on keeping a healthy lifestyle. Another option, is to contact WoW regarding an application form to apply for the championship training programme.

Contact details: phone – 021 4836651 e-mail – [wow@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:wow@westerncape.gov.za)

## What now?

Now, your final task is to think about changes you still want to make in your life. Remember, this is about getting the most out of life, increasing your quality of life. Are there still some things missing in your life, things that you would still like to be able to do? In the box below, write down some of the things that are still missing. You can use this list to keep working on your goals from now on.



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## Action Plan Form

---

Be sure your action plan includes:

*What* you want to do

*How much* you are going to do

*When* you are going to do it

*How many* days a week you are going to do it

For example: This week, I will walk (*what*) around the block (*how much*) before lunch (*when*) three times (*how many*).

This week I will:

\_\_\_\_\_ (*what*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*how much*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*when*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*how many?*)

How confident are you that you can complete this action plan?

\_\_\_\_\_

Not at all | | | | | | | | | | Totally  
confident 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 confident

Keep a record of how you did:

	I Plan to.....	I did.....
<b>Monday</b>		
<b>Tuesday</b>		
<b>Wednesday</b>		
<b>Thursday</b>		
<b>Friday</b>		
<b>Saturday</b>		
<b>Sunday</b>		

---

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\_\_\_\_\_ (*how many?*)

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<b>Saturday</b>		
<b>Sunday</b>		

# Exercise Diary

Start off by writing down your goal.

Write down here what you want to be able to do: \_\_\_\_\_

Now, what do you want to be able to do this week which will help you to reach your goal?

Remember from your action plan to include:

*What* you want to do

*How much* you are going to do

*When* you are going to do it

*How many* days a week you are going to do it

For example: This week, I will walk (*what*) around the block (*how much*) before lunch (*when*) three times (*how many*).

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\_\_\_\_\_ (*what*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*how much*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*when*)

\_\_\_\_\_ (*how many?*)

	Exercise Planned	Exercise I did...	How did I feel? Do you need to change anything?
e.g.	20 mins in a.m. after breakfast and in p.m. after supper		Very tired by the second session, I'm going to cut it down to morning only for this week.
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Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			

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