



How to Manage Sub-Acute or Chronic Pain

By Cheryl Clark, LMT

1. **Stop.** At least temporarily, eliminate activities that irritate or escalate your pain. Moderate walking, gentle stretching, range of motion exercise in a pool or hot tub can be helpful while working on your pain.
2. **Drink more water.** Increase your water intake to facilitate the removal of metabolic waste from the problem area.
3. **Use heat and/or cold packs.** Heat for 10 to 20 minutes increases blood flow and can soothe painful, tight muscles and calm spasm. Application of cold for 10 minutes sends blood and interstitial fluid away, calming inflammation and reducing swelling. Use caution. Protect your skin with a layer of towel. Experiment with both heat and cold applications. If used in combination, always end with cold.
4. **Breathe.** Practice slow, deep breathing to maximize oxygen in the blood.
5. **Get plenty of rest and sleep.** Healing occurs in deep realm sleep.
6. **Consider medication.** Both over the counter and prescribed meds are sometimes needed to interrupt the pain cycle and can provide temporary help. Try topical application of pain relief products (i.e. Biofreeze, Tiefu, etc.) to bring the pain level down.
7. **Improve your nutrition.** Give your body the raw materials or fuel it needs in order to heal and maintain balance. Twinkies do not reduce pain or aide healing.
8. **Strengthen and stretch.** By participating in activities that include both strengthening and stretching, you'll reduce muscle imbalance and the subsequent postural deviations that are often the underlying cause and perpetuating factors in chronic pain.
9. **Reduce stress.** The unrelenting stress response will intensify your pain and uses up vital energy that you need for healing.
10. **Remain optimistic.** Mindset has a powerful influence over the body.

11. **Educate yourself.** Information is empowering. Find out what has helped others. Talk to the professionals: your doctor, osteopath, massage therapist, chiropractor, physical therapist, herbalist, nutritionist, fitness professional, etc.
12. **Commit to a maintenance or prevention program.** Diligence in caring for the body and mind pays off in better overall health and lower pain levels.