



## DON'T LET CHRONIC PAIN TAKE OVER YOUR WORK



*(pain management)*

Have you been suffering from prolonged chronic pain? Do you feel that medication and treatment were inadequate? Is your everyday life being affected? Managing chronic pain can be complicated and frustrating, because such pain is unpredictable, invisible and not always caused by a single reason.

It creates limitations and puts a strain on personal, social, physical and emotional wellbeing. Chronic pain can be associated with an accident or previous illness such as chronic disease, cancer or after-effects of cancer, and even musculoskeletal disorders.

Other issues such as mental health disorders (depression or anxiety disorders), emotional stress, inability to perform everyday tasks and other chronic diseases are also associated with chronic pain and differ between individuals. The comorbidity of mental health and chronic pain arises due to the strain on self-esteem, and decline in capacity to complete work and everyday tasks. This pain affects not only the one body part but is spread out indirectly throughout the body and mind. Therefore, it is important to manage pain using multiple self-management techniques so that the overall wellbeing is improved and pain can be managed-enough to do everyday tasks without hindrance.

## HEALTHY & HAPPY LIFESTYLE

Since chronic pain remains even after medications, self-management techniques can help in controlling the worsening of pain, and eventually preventing it from creating a hindrance at work. Such methods would also improve self-esteem, mental health and wellness. Start your journey towards chronic pain management with setting small, achievable goals and going at your own pace.

### EXERCISE & MEDITATION

Going for walks and doing frequent but low impact exercise would not only keep the body muscles moving but also increase stamina and endurance level. Join a group or take up small tasks- it will boost your energy level, and you will slowly gain control over the pain.

Meditation would also help to control the body and mind and strengthen muscles to improve mental health and also relieve pain. A good example would be trying yoga or tai-chi at home!

### EATING BETTER

Having a healthy diet helps in controlling chronic inflammation and improving the immune system. Incorporating healthy fats, fruits, vegetables, and nutrient-rich food can lower sugar, lower inflammation in the body and improve vitamin and minerals in the body. A healthy diet would prevent the onset of other chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease, and also promote a healthy mind.

### PERSONAL WELLNESS

Chronic pain impacts mental health in various ways, and so it can be challenging to manage mental health and pain simultaneously. However, focusing on yourself and your needs can boost feelings of happiness and accomplishment, and take away some of the emotional stress and pain. Focus on yourself to improve personal wellness- take up new hobbies or explore old interests, take out time for family and include family and close friends in managing your pain. Remember that you are not alone!

Ask a professional about natural forms of pain remedies to reduce chronic pain. Explore different therapies such as cognitive-behavioural therapy or physical therapy to tackle the pain from a different angle.

## OPEN COMMUNICATION AT WORKPLACE

Openly disclosing problems related to your chronic pain can be a challenging task at a workplace. However, such communication is vital in making sure a support system is established to help manage chronic pain in the long run, and to minimize any work-related misunderstandings or limitations. Additionally, establishing a need for specific work accommodations according to the job and pain type would prevent further limitations in work life.

## REFERENCES

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