



**WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT ALL THE DIFFERENT TREATMENTS THAT YOU OR YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE TRIED FOR PAIN, IT GETS CONFUSING!**

**BELOW IS A LIST OF ALL THE BENEFICIAL TREATMENTS THAT RESEARCH SHOWS WILL HELP, AND TO BE MOST EFFECTIVE, EACH PERSON REQUIRES A UNIQUE COMBINATION:**

TREATMENT	WHY IT WORKS	WHERE IT WORKS	HOW LONG TO TAKE EFFECT
<b>Aerobic Exercise/movement</b> (large, repetitious, whole-body movements that are <b>least</b> irritating—ask your PT for help to figure out what works as needed)	Movement is medicine. Movement and exercise stimulate our cells to remodel themselves, and allow us to incrementally increase our strength, endurance, and flexibility over time even if we have pain or other health conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Calms the brain</li> <li>Stimulates ALL cells to regenerate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Calming can be immediate</li> <li>Cell regeneration is ongoing and varies by tissue—muscle being the fastest healing, and nerves taking the longest</li> </ul>
<b>Rocking</b> (in rocking chair, etc.)	Rocking is hard-wired into our nervous system to calm us	Calms the brain	Immediate
<b>Skillful delivery of medication</b>	Sometimes we all need a little help to get over the hump and gain momentum for feeling better	All areas of the body depending on the medication	Consult your physician or pharmacist
<b>Learning about pain</b>	Did you know that knowing more about how pain works helps you have less pain? This is mostly because the pain isn't as scary any more	The brain-accurate and practical information makes pain less scary	In about 30 minutes of learning about pain
<b>Pacing Activities and Positions</b>	Have you been caught in the <b>boom-</b> (you feel somewhat better so you ___ (clean your house, do yardwork, etc)) <b>bust</b> (now you feel bad, and so you ___ (have to stay in bed for a couple days, take more medication, etc.) in order to feel better) <b>cycle?</b> When you are stuck in this cycle, it takes less and less to make you feel worse and worse. The good news is that breaking up your activities into smaller, non-irritating, bite-sized pieces desensitizes your body's tissues, and over time helps you to feel incrementally better and better while doing more and more	The nerve fibers by desensitizing them	5-6 days to begin the process and the benefits continue as long as you have pain or discomfort
<b>Relaxation</b> (activating the calming half of the nervous system). The Care Channel	When we are able to get more of the calming half of our nervous system, this reduces stress chemicals, which	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Calms the brain</li> <li>Decreases the sensitivity of the</li> </ul>	Immediate benefit that grows over time as you change your

**There is no one giant step that does it, it's a lot of little steps - Peter A Cohen**



here at HRH is an easy way to start this process.	then desensitizes our body and the benefits of this increase the longer you do it. It will even help your body to heal itself and live longer!	rest of the nervous system	brains' structure and chemistry
<b>Meditation/Mindfulness</b> —all of the following have some parts that are free, and some have additional content for a cost: Pacifica; Brain Yoga (calming puzzles); Insight Timer; Aura; Omvana; Stop, Breathe, Think (helps you get acquainted with mindfulness before diving in); Calm ( <a href="http://www.calm.com">www.calm.com</a> ; Calm also has sleep stories to prepare you for sleep). Ask your caregiver to let you try some of these on an HRH tablet. Praying is also a form of meditation, but it needs to be calming. You can request a chaplain if you want help in this area.	There are many ways to meditate or be mindful, but all of them bring your mind to the here and now. Thinking about the future can cause fear and anxiety. Thinking about the past can cause regret and shame. All we REALLY have is this present moment, and all we can control is our own behavior right now. We now know that we need at least 20 minutes of this per day in order to be healthy—what better time to start than now?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Calms the brain</li> <li>▪ Decreases the sensitivity of the rest of the nervous system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Immediate benefit that grows over time as you: change your brains' structure and chemistry</li> <li>▪ Change the function of your genes</li> </ul>
<b>Diet</b> (healthy, with emphasis on anti-inflammatory diet—ask your caregiver for a handout on this)	Did you know that your body is home to many tiny non-human cells? Healthy eating allows these cells and our own body's cells to function properly. Also, all body functions need water, and often we are not taking enough fluids for good healing. Help your body heal with the food and liquids you take in!	The entire body	About 2-4 weeks
<b>Sleep</b> promotion (ask your caregiver for a handout on this)	The place you sleep, what you do leading up to sleep, what you eat before sleep all have an effect on your sleeping. Did you know that your body's main healing time is during sleep? Making sure that everything going on before and during sleep time will help you feel much better sooner.	The entire body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Immediate benefit</li> <li>▪ Delayed benefit to undo all of the bad effects of sleep deprivation</li> </ul>
<b>Gratitude Journaling</b> —best done: 3 or more times/week, by actually writing down what you are grateful for, and being very specific about that you are	We have 2 parts of our brain that quiet the other: 1. The middle brain—processes emotions AND pain (this is why they rise and fall together), 2. The upper front brain—	The top and center parts of the brain	Immediate benefit that grows over time as you change your brains' structure and chemistry



grateful for (ask your caregiver for a sample journal or check your phone apps for electronic versions)	does logical thinking, problem-solving and planning. Gratitude journaling turns on the problem-solving part of the brain, which will decrease the pain and emotions you experience.		
<b>Distraction</b> —can include coloring or dot-to-dot books, word search, art, crafts, music, Care Channel, games, jigsaw puzzles, pet therapy, iPad, focal point, TV, reading, social interaction, and phone conversations. <b>Keep in mind that these will be most effective if they are relaxation/calming (if watching the news or sports upsets you, then it is not relaxing).</b>	When we are in pain, it's as if parts of our brain are in a pain meeting. When this happens, those parts of our brain are not fully doing their job (this is why you might feel like you can't remember anything, you're in a brain fog, your movements are less coordinated, etc. Distraction works by pulling parts of your brain out of the pain meeting and re-focusing them on the here and now.	The top and center parts of the brain	Immediate benefit that grows over time as you change your brains' structure and chemistry
<b>Healthy coping skills</b> (not drugs or alcohol)	This can include analyzing the problem and brainstorming a solution, taking small steps to add up to big progress, getting support from family and friends, taking care of yourself, and looking at what has happened from a different perspective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The brain chemistry and structure as inhibitory/beneficial chemicals are released and fear decreases</li> <li>▪ The body as the tissues are desensitized</li> </ul>	Immediate benefit that grows over time as you change your brains' structure and chemistry
<b>Modalities</b> (ice, heat, TENS, electrical stimulation)	Heat, ice, TENS, and electrical stimulation all give input into our brain and body that activates our brain and body's own pain killing chemicals (we call this a wet brain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mainly the tissues right under the modality (Ice pack, heating pad, etc.)</li> <li>▪ The whole body in reaction to the decreased symptoms</li> </ul>	5 minutes, and effects may accumulate over time
<b>Posture/Ergonomics and Positioning</b> (ask a PT or OT about this)	Holding our bodies in stressed positions over time or in prolonged positions causes tissue irritation and often pain. Correcting our daily body positions can go a long way to helping us feel better.	The stressed part of the body for which corrections are made	Immediate benefit
<b>Graded Motor Imagery</b> (ask your PT or OT about this one; start with the Recognise app)	Our brain is constantly keeping track of our body via body maps in our brains. If our brain's view of the body	The genetic body maps that are in a strip shape around	1-2 weeks for the first step, and several months for



available on iTunes or GooglePlay)	part is fuzzy, then we can have more pain. On the other hand, the clearer our brain's view of the body, typically the less pain we have.	our brains, known as the homunculus.	the entire sequence
<b>Social Interaction</b>	Getting support from friends, loved ones and pastor or chaplain helps your brain and body to produce more of our own pain killing chemicals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The brain chemistry (production of Oxytocin—the “love hormone”)</li> <li>▪ the body when the beneficial chemicals travel through it</li> </ul>	A few minutes
<b>Humor</b>	Laughter is the best medicine—laughing calms our nervous system and releases pain killing chemicals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The brain chemistry and structure as inhibitory/beneficial chemicals are released</li> <li>▪ the body when the beneficial chemicals travel through it</li> </ul>	Immediate benefit
<b>Goal setting</b>	Sometimes when we aren't feeling well we also feel out of control: of our bodies, our emotions, our health. Working with your health-care team to have mutual goals is a must: if your caregiver forgets to work with you, feel free to ask questions and let them know what is important to you.	The top and center parts of the brain	Immediate benefit that grows over time as you change your brains' structure and chemistry
<b>Manual Body Work: Massage Physical Therapy</b> (a variety of treatments a skilled therapist does with you as a patient)	Relaxation can be achieved through various types of body work including massage, Feldenkrais, Positional release, and Craniosacral therapy among others. It's hard to get back to “calm” if you can't remember what it should feel like. You can then reproduce this effect for yourself by using a home program. The following methods are also often included when working with a pain specialist: teaching you how your nervous system works and how you can calm it. Calming/relaxation then occurs through a home program that uses the following methods: thinking (how we think about our life and situation), body (movement and	Sensory input is the “food” of the nervous system, and massage is one method of this. The more sensory input you give your nervous system the better it functions.	Immediate and long-term by increasing the sensory integration of the body (helping the brain to make better sense of sensations), and decreasing tissue sensitivity

	activity), and nervous system (how excited or calm it is).		
<b>Aquatic therapy</b> (ask your caregiver about a PT referral to see if this might work for you)	Moving and exercising in the water takes advantage of the unloading and pressure of water, and both can allow you to do more activity with less irritation than on land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Buoyancy of water unloads joints</li> <li>▪ Hydrostatic pressure gives gentle resistance and gives compression which helps decrease swelling</li> <li>▪ Warmth of water increases tissue “stretchability” allowing for easier movement</li> </ul>	Immediate benefit that also brings long-term gains of strength, flexibility, and range of motion over time



## ASK YOUR MEDICAL CARE-GIVER FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ANY OF THESE TOPICS

Check out the following excellent videos and resources explaining more about persistent pain:

How pain becomes chronic and what to start doing about it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWMKucuejls>

Understanding persistent pain and the brain: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlwn9rC3rOI>

The brain and stopping opioid medication: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MII myFQPdCE>

The American Chronic Pain Association has many resources for helping pain: [Home \(acpanow.com\)](http://acpanow.com)