

Practical Ways to Deal With Chronic Pain Without Medication or Direct Intervention

Chronic pain is tiresome. It refers to a persistent pain that lasts for more than 3-6 months. The pain can not only be physically debilitating, but it can also affect your mental health and wellbeing. At Osteopathy For All, we want you to live as pain free as possible.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread, self-isolation continues across the UK. This means that people are finding it difficult to get hold of medication, or to visit their osteopath, and are trying to manage pain alone.

We want to change that. This article has been put together to help deal with chronic pain without needing medication or direct intervention from your osteopath.

Take part in regular exercise

When you have persistent pain, it can be really hard to keep mobile. As there is a fear that you are doing damage. However, too much rest can actually make the pain worse. Inactivity causes your muscles to stiffen. So you need to choose and exercise or activity that gently gets you moving but that doesn't put too much strain on your body.

Tai chi is a great form of exercise for those with chronic pain. With moderate moving and a focus on breathing techniques, they increase the flow of oxygen to your brain and improve your energy levels. The combination of physical movements and deep breathing also helps relieve muscle tension.

Regular workouts not only get you moving but they also help keep your brain active. Which in turn boosts your mental health and helps you feel less stressed.

Self-massage the affected area

Soft tissue massage is a tried and tested osteopathic technique to reduce pain without medication. Even gentle techniques can help

relax muscle tissues and relieve tension. During massage, blood flow is increased which helps your body to function properly.

There are many ways to self-massage at home including using foam rollers, tennis balls or your own two hands!

Hot and cold therapy

Cold and heat therapy is another method used by osteopathic practitioners to help ease pain. For chronic pain, heat is usually more beneficial but shouldn't be used when there is bruising or swelling. Heat increases blood flow and helps to relax muscles. Hot packs or hot water bottles are great for easing tight muscles.

Cold therapy lowers the temperature of the damaged tissue and helps to relieve pain and reduce swelling. It constricts the blood flow and is most useful for more acute injuries such as a sprained ankle. Cold therapy shouldn't be used on stiff joints or muscles.

Please make sure there is enough barrier between your skin and the heat or cold packs to protect your skin. Contact Osteopathy For All or your general practitioner if you're unsure which method is best for you.

Using hot and cold packs in easing the symptoms of chronic pain



Use for:

- reducing swelling

Do not use:

- for stiff joints or muscles



Use for:

- easing tight muscles

Do not use:

- when there is swelling or bruising

Try to clear your mind

Chronic pain can often be exacerbated by stress. This can lead to your muscles becoming stiff, sore and tender. There may be a certain part of your body which aches, or it can shift all over your body. Try to reduce your stress by using relaxation techniques.

Meditation is proven to reduce stress. By clearing your thoughts, it gives you the space to sort out your thoughts and emotions. With chronic pain, meditation helps you refocus thoughts about your pain and take attention away from it.

Getting a good night's sleep will do wonders for you and your persistent pain. It may be easier said than done, especially with that nagging pain keeping you up. But sleep will help you feel better. Sleeping regenerates our energy levels and reduces stress.

Keep hydrated

Our bodies are made up of a lot of water, approximately 55%-60% in adults. We need to keep drinking water throughout the day to stay hydrated. Dehydration can cause a decrease in the elasticity of the muscle tissues and reduce blood flow.

Drinking water helps your body work as it flushes toxins out from your systems. Staying hydrated can help manage inflammation and reduce pain. Dehydration can cause headaches and fatigue, so it is best to keep your water levels topped up!

It is often recommended that you drink 8 glasses or 2 litres of water a day. Everybody is unique so the amount you need to drink will be different from others. Signs of dehydration include feeling thirsty, dark yellow urine, dry lips and feeling lightheaded. If you experience any of these symptoms, have a glass of water.

Eat a healthy diet

To keep our bodies as healthy as possible it is important to eat a wide variety of foods. We recommend eating a rainbow every day to ensure that you are getting the wide variety of nutrients that your body needs. Sometimes when our bodies are struggling from a long term or chronic condition it becomes harder for the body to access the nutrients it needs. Providing the body with fresh, unprocessed food gives it the best chance of reducing symptoms.



Osteopathy for all

Eat a Rainbow!



Yellow

- Lemons
- Corn
- Banana
- Yellow Peppers
- Pears

Orange

- Oranges
- Pumpkin
- Carrots
- Sweet Potato
- Apricots

Red

- Red Peppers
- Tomato
- Strawberries
- Raspberries
- Red Grapes

Purple

- Onions
- Red Cabbage
- Asparagus
- Plums
- Beetroot

Green

- Apples
- Cucumber
- Broccoli
- Peas
- Limes

At Osteopathy For All, we are determined to help you manage chronic pain. We aim to support you with osteopathic advice and self-help techniques, even while you're at home.

If you need more information or advice around chronic pain, contact us today by emailing hello@osteopathyforall.co.uk or calling 01825 840582.