

ADDITIONAL PAIN RELIEF THERAPIES

The goal of pain management is to **increase function**, improve **quality of life**, and to **reduce one's sense of suffering**. Below are many successful therapies to help treat and manage acute and chronic pain. Pain can be a complex physical and often emotional experience. We encourage all of our patients to explore and combine several of these options, as these are likely to be more effective in managing chronic pain than relying on just one method.

Most Importantly

- Keep a **positive** attitude—**YOU** are in control!
- **Avoid nicotine**—nicotine (in any form of cigarettes, patches, gum, vaping, etc) squeezes blood vessels throughout the body and prevents overall blood flow; this can prevent healing, cause chronic inflammation, worsen pain, and is one of the biggest risk factors for chronic back and neck pain
- **Eat healthier**—read about 'anti-inflammatory diets'; avoid heavy, fatty foods; eat less red meat; limit sugars and unhealthy snacks; track daily caloric intake (i.e. MyFitnessPal app)
- **Stay as active as possible**—every little bit helps; set small functional goals

Active and Passive Bodily Therapies:

- chiropractic therapy
- physical therapy
- water/pool therapy
- yoga
- Tai Chi
- Pilates
- therapeutic massage
- acupuncture
- TENS unit (over-the-counter or prescription versions available)
- massage canes (Theracane, Body Back, etc.)—very good for hard-to-reach muscle pains/knots
- foam rollers (for muscle pain/spasms)

Relaxation and Coping Techniques:

- pain psychology
- group pain therapy/support groups
- cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)
- biofeedback
- deep breathing and mindful meditation
- hypnosis
- distraction techniques (drawing, painting, coloring, reading, puzzles, projects, etc.)
- try these free apps (Headspace, Pain Relief Hypnosis, JC Hypnosis)

Topical Medicines:

- **Lidocaine 4% ointments or patches (odor-free Aspercreme)**; also Salon Pas and Icy Hot brands)
- **Salon Pas patches/creams**
- **Capsaicin 0.01-0.025%** creams/patches (note: this is made from chili peppers; may cause mild to moderate heat sensation; consider applying lidocaine ointment to skin prior to use)
- Biofreeze
- Tiger Balm

Vitamins/Supplements/Natural treatments:

- Anti-inflammatory/Pain: **Turmeric capsules (1000mg daily)**, Fish Oil, Omega 3, Omega 6, Acetyl-L-carnitine, alpha lipoic acid (ALA)
- Vitamin E—may help nerve-type/neuropathic pain
- Vitamin D (chronic low levels may contribute to chronic pain)
- Anti-nausea: ginger root
- Sleep aids: melatonin (3-10mg nightly); ZMA (zinc + magnesium aspartate); magnesium (many people are deficient in magnesium—low magnesium may contribute to poor sleep and chronic pain)

Sleep Hygiene:

- discuss ongoing sleep issues with your primary care physician or sleep specialist
- avoid screens (TV, computer, cell phones, iPad) for at least 2 hours prior to bedtime
- set a bedtime at the same time every night
- read a book prior to bedtime
- try melatonin (3-10mg nightly)
 - try magnesium or ZMA (zinc + magnesium aspartate)
- avoid caffeine; avoid daytime naps
- try meditation or sleep hypnosis/relaxation recordings/free apps (Harmony, White Noise, Calm, Relax Melodies, etc)