



AdvaCare Clinics: Chronic Pain Relief through Physical Therapy

Chronic pain is a devastating health problem that affects at least 116 million American adults—more than the total affected by heart disease, cancer, and diabetes combined. The most common types of pain include arthritis, lower back, bone/joint pain, muscle pain and fibromyalgia. The loss of productivity and daily activity due to pain is substantial. It costs the nation up to \$635 billion each year in medical treatment and lost productivity. Chronic pain affects people of all ages, races, and occupations and without treatment, pain can have a significant impact on the pain sufferer and their entire family.

Some long-time sufferers withdraw from activities that once gave them joy. They feel depressed, angry and helpless. This kind of hurt cannot be treated with single-service therapies.



It is important to approach pain both physically and emotionally and addressing people as entire human beings. So while chronic pain medication can be effective and important for pain management for many people, it isn't the only tool available when it comes to pain treatment and it shouldn't be the only tool that's used.

Physical therapy is a very important part of any pain management program. Pain can be worsened by exercise that isn't done correctly (or interpreted incorrectly as pain rather than overuse), and a physical therapist can tailor the right exercise regimen for you. Proper exercise slowly builds your tolerance and reduces your pain — you won't end up overdoing it and giving up because it hurts.

Cognitive-behavioral therapy allows people to learn and have a better understanding of what the pain is from, and what they can do about it. This therapy is really about understanding the role of pain in your life and what it actually means for you.

A variety of approaches and modalities can help you deal with both the physical and emotional parts of pain:

- TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) therapy
- Meditation

- Relaxation techniques
- Visual imagery, as simple as picturing a peaceful scene, for example
- Biofeedback, which teaches control over muscle tension, temperature, heart rate and more
- Heat and cold therapy
- Manipulation and massage
- Iontophoresis Therapy
- Custom Orthotics (arch supports)
- Movement therapy and exercise
 - Movement-based therapies such as yoga, tai chi, qigong and more mainstream forms of exercise are gaining acceptance in the world of chronic pain management.

The bottom line: Seek help for your pain as soon as it becomes a problem in your life. We aren't guaranteed lives without pain, but when chronic pain starts to destroy your ability to function in the world, it's a problem that needs to be addressed.

For more information or to make an appointment, contact AdvaCare Clinics at 952-835-6653.

