

Tips for Young People Managing Chronic Pain

The 4 S's

Here are some tips and treats that can help you on your recovery journey. To learn more, have a look at some of the resources we have provided on the chronic pain information document.

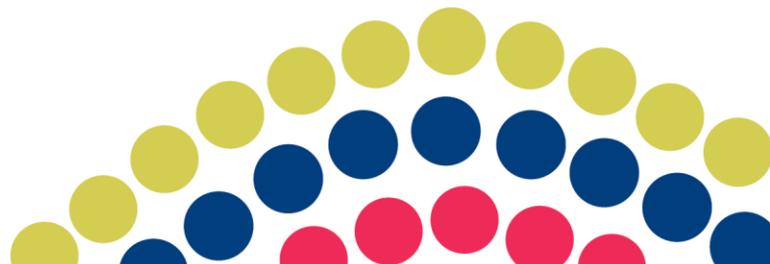
School

- > It's really important to attend school regularly and this means making some plans that can help you to manage discomfort. Going to school means that you keep in regular contact with friends and stay successful. School routines are really important to help with your recovery.
- > Talking to your teachers and setting up a plan is the first step so that they know how hard you are working at the moment.
- > It also helps to have steps in place to manage lessons successfully. This may include taking planned short breaks to a quieter area and then returning to the classroom after about 20 minutes or so. Somewhere you can practice some stretching, mindfulness, relaxation or breathing techniques will be a good place to take a break. Other strategies include talking to friends at break times and using heat/cool packs to ease discomfort.
- > It is really important that you keep up physical activity during school time. This may include making a modified program or adding extra breaks so that the activities are manageable and paced. You might talk with a physiotherapist about the appropriate level of activity in each school term.
- > Everyone's experience of pain is unique to them so having a plan for regular attendance that supports learning is very important.



Smart Movement

- > Keeping active is really important. Regular movement keeps your muscles strong and helps to turn down the volume of pain. Movement can also help to improve mood, sleep and helps you focus when studying.
- > Movement needs to be regular, paced and planned. So doing a small amount of movement often is the key to success. Pacing movement by gradually building up to doing more and more will help to get your body safely moving comfortably again.
- > Listen and talk to your physiotherapist who can help with any worries that you might have about movement. A physiotherapist can guide you on the right amount of activity and help you to focus on what you can do rather than what you can't do.



Sleep

- > Getting a good night's sleep is going to help with your recovery as well as your ability to concentrate at school. If you are struggling with sleep in any way then talk to your parents or someone from your team who will try to help you. There are lots of strategies that can help!
- > A good sleep routine is the first step which means establishing good sleep habits an hour before bedtime. These might include having a shower, reading a book, listening to music, practicing some relaxation techniques, having a small snack and a de-caffeinated drink. Most of all it means switching off screens an hour before turning out the light for sleep so that your mind has some time to prepare for bedtime.
- > Relaxation techniques are very helpful when you are experiencing discomfort or struggling to sleep. We can talk to you about these during your appointments and we have included some apps on our information document that can guide you through short meditation and mindfulness exercises that are great relaxation tools. There might be other things that you like to do to relax like reading a book or listening to music. It's important to do whatever works for you!



Social

- > Experiencing pain is stressful and it can be hard for friends to understand what you're going through. Talking to a psychologist or trusted adult who can help if you're having difficulties with peers can be very helpful. Psychologists can help to generate new ways to handle any challenges and help you to use the strengths that you already have just used in different ways.
- > It is so important to stay connected with friends and make time to have fun. Doing things that you enjoy with friends, such as going to the beach, watching TV shows/movies, playing games or just talking is great!
- > Attending social events can sometimes be tricky but by thinking about strategies to help you manage and perhaps having a buddy can make them more successful. Being involved in your regular activities with friends helps you stay on track.



For more information

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