



# Simplifying Non-Pharmacological Treatments for Chronic Pain: Mindfulness

When patients with chronic pain can uncouple their responses to pain from the actual physical sensations, they are able to form a healthier response and, in turn, suffer less.

## Incorporating mindfulness into your practice

Mindfulness is paying attention or being aware<sup>1</sup>:

### In a particular way

Perhaps start with grounding, which is using our senses to stay connected to the current moment.

Or your “particular way” could be tuning in to your breath or doing a body scan.

### On purpose

Formal mindfulness practice is a mental exercise. We choose to do it.

We intentionally choose where, when, and how to do it and for how long.

### In the moment

The meditation is about what is happening right now. It is not about an idea or image. It is about what you are aware of in this moment.

### Non-judgmentally

One of the aspects of mindfulness practice that many find most challenging is being non-judgmental, especially of ourselves and of our mindfulness practice.

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Kabat-Zinn J. *Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness meditation in everyday life*.

Hachette Books; 1994

Mindfulness-based pain interventions have been found to be associated with improvements in<sup>2</sup>:

- Pain symptoms
- Depression
- Quality of life related to both physical and mental health

Interested in learning more? Visit <https://cfpclearn.ca/> to view the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC)'s four-part webinar and podcast series on non-pharmacological treatments for chronic pain. The CFPC has certified this Self-Learning series for up to four Mainpro+® credits.

<sup>1</sup> Kabat-Zinn J. *Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness meditation in everyday life*. New York, NY: Hachette Books; 1994.

<sup>2</sup> Hilton L, Hempel S, Ewing BA, Apaydin E, Xenakis L, Newberry S, et al. Mindfulness meditation for chronic pain: systematic review and meta-analysis. *Ann Behav Med*. 2017;51(2):199-213.



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