

Simplifying Non-Pharmacological Treatments for Chronic Pain: Motivating movement

Help your patient identify a movement goal that:

- Is rewarding and meaningful to them¹
 - Is achievable²
 - Gives them a sense of accomplishment³
 - Keeps them below their pain threshold¹
 - Can be done regularly¹
- Is a baseline of activity they can start, then build on¹
 - They are confident they will achieve (no lower than an 8/10 rating on an analogue scale)³
 - Focuses on activity rather than exercise; it is all about movement¹

Cheerleading success

Have your patient self-rate their overall feelings of well-being before and after the activity so they can see the change after engaging in movement.³



Addressing common pitfalls and promoting movement in your practice

Pitfall	Solution
"More activity will cause me more pain."	Together, find an activity that your patient enjoys and does not cause them pain.
"I am active, but then I pay for it days later."	Your patient is likely doing too much activity at once. Encourage less activity done regularly to help dial down pain sensitivity.
"I am so out of shape it would take me forever to get back in shape."	The goal is to improve function to be able to do what is important to your patient in daily life, not to get in shape.
"I tried to do exercises for my pain before, but they didn't help."	Previous exercises may have been injury focused. Continue to encourage movement as a strategy to build more function and experience less pain.
"If I can't do it like I used to, then why bother?"	Reassure the patient that progression takes time.
"If I feel any pain, it must be bad."	Help your patient distinguish between chronic pain and exercise-related feelings in the context of central sensitization.



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.



Scan the QR code with your smart phone to go to <https://cfpclearn.ca>.

¹ McCracken LM, Samuel VM. The role of avoidance, pacing, and other activity patterns in chronic pain. *Pain*. 2007;130(1-2):119-125.

² Sternbach RA. Treatment of the chronic pain patient. *J Hum Stress*. 1978;4(3):11-15.

³ Strecher VJ, McEvoy DeVellis B, Becker MH, Rosenstock IM. The role of self-efficacy in achieving health behavior change. *Health Educ Q*. 1986;13(1):73-92.