



Practical Tips for Pain Relief

by Jan Sadler, MBE, PainSupport
www.painsupport.co.uk

Practical pain relief suggestions that really work.

They will help you to reduce your pain and get back in control of your life.

At the very end there is a list of useful free downloads by Jan Sadler.

TENS

TENS machines are a useful tool for many people with pain. They consist of a small, battery driven, handheld device with small sticky pads which you fix to your body either side of the part that hurts. The device gives out a pleasant low buzzing sensation which blocks the pain messages from the area of pain. For the best relief with TENS you need to experiment as to where you place the pads. Good devices come with a manual which will explain everything. Buy TENS from Boots the Chemist or from a reliable source online such as those below. I recommend that you buy replacement pads that are for sensitive skin.

<http://www.naturesgatetens.com>

<http://www.bodyclock.co.uk>

Heat and Cold

Hot and cold packs. Heat and cold are great for reducing pain and inflammation.

Always cover the packs with a towel to protect your skin.

Alternate the packs and use each pack for about 3 minutes, 3 times in all, hot/cold/hot/cold/hot/cold. Finish with a cold pack if there is inflammation.

Don't use cold packs for longer than 15 minutes at a time.

And be aware that heat can aggravate an already inflamed joint.

Hot and Cold packs from PhysioRoom.

<http://www.physioroom.com/>

Heat and Cold, cont'd

Spray, rub and roll-on relief.

Various sprays, creams, gels and roll-ons deliver either heat or cold to bring relief by numbing nerve endings and increasing blood flow to the area, for faster healing.

Try *Biofreeze* or *Deep Heat*. You can also buy anti-inflammatory creams and gels such as *Ibuleve*. All can be bought over the counter at Boots and other pharmacies, or online. No prescription needed.

Your Breath

Use your breath, it's a great 'tool' to relieve pain and stress. Use this technique throughout the day and in bed at night.

Stop what you're doing – be still and bring your attention to your body.

Breathe in gently but deeply through your nose, make sure your abdomen rises and not your chest. Breathe out gently through your mouth, with a slight sigh. Make the out-breath longer than the in-breath.

Imagine all the pain flowing out with your breath. Relax around your mouth and gently smile on the out breath. Feel your body begin to soften and relax.

Enjoy the growing feelings of calm and being more in control.

Take 3 or 4 slow breaths like this when you feel under pressure from pain or stress.

Hands on pain relief

Change focus. Your brain tends to concentrate on the newest physical sensations in your body - use this to your advantage.

First of all, notice the level of your pain. Then concentrate on one of your hands. Slowly and lightly rub your thumb and the fingers of that hand against each other for a minute or so and focus on the sensation you can feel in the fingers. Notice everything about it, texture, temperature, sensation, etc. Now notice your pain level - has it changed?

You can also use the rubbing sensation to remind yourself to take several slow deeper breaths which will also help to reduce any pain.

Trigger points. Marble-size knots in your muscles are called trigger points. Press the trigger point with enough pressure to see a white mark from your finger and hold for 30-50 seconds. It will hurt at first, but the pain should ease as you continue to press. If not, stop!

Massage. Massage is an ago old remedy that soothes and heals. You can massage parts of your body yourself or ask a friend or family member to do it for you. You can also have sessions with a professional masseur or aromatherapist. Use a massage oil, plain or perfumed to help your hands glide smoothly over your skin. Buy from somewhere reputable like Neal's Yard or The Body Shop.

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Hands on pain relief Cont'd

Ease tension in your hands and body. Massage each hand in turn. Grasp one hand between the thumb and index finger of the other hand and then massage each part of your hand, fingers and thumb in a circular motion. Include your palm and the base of your hand and all the joints, unless you have arthritis. Finish by pulling gently on each finger, one at a time.

Relax your head. Press your fingertips or thumbs against your temples and massage in a circular motion. Let your mouth drop slightly open as you do it to relax your jaw. Massage slowly in small circles all around your hairline.

Positions to ease pain

I find the following positions helpful to ease sciatica and back pain.

1. If it is your back that hurts, try taking the pressure off by resting face down on the floor with your arms by your sides. Lie in this way for as long as is comfortable and until the pain settles down a little.
2. Lie on the floor, face up, with your bottom right up against an easy chair or sofa, with your legs on the seat, so your thighs are at a right angle with your body. This position will help to relieve the pressure on your lower back. Stay like this for as long as it helps.
3. Kneel close to the side of a dining chair, lean forward over the seat and let your head and arms flop down on the other side. Stay like this for two minutes maximum. This position can be especially good for relief from sciatica.

NB Please take care. Be sure you can get up and down from the floor by yourself. Also it's always best to check with your doctor or physiotherapist if any particular exercise is suitable for your condition, especially if you have headaches or heart problems.

Keep Moving

Take a Stretch Break

Regular short stretch breaks taken during the day will help to ease pain and improve mobility.

Relieve neck and shoulder tension by stretching your arms as high as you can. Stretch and then stretch a little more, then release, bringing your arms down gently. Circle your shoulders forwards and backwards once or twice. Gently move your head from side to side and up and down, without straining or pushing. Let your jaw relax. Soften around your eyes. Take three deep breaths through your nose. Mentally let go of stress and tension as you breathe out through your mouth.

Cont'd

Bathtime

Have warm baths or showers as often as you need as they help to ease the pain. Soaking in a tub full of warm water can work wonders when you're feeling stressed. The warm water relaxes you physically, loosening tight, stiff muscles. And, as a result, you relax mentally as well as physically.

Sing in the shower or bath

Singing in the shower or bath can give a boost to your mood and your health. Singing makes you breathe deeply which helps to lift your spirits and counteract anxiety – and reduce pain.

Epsom salts

Epsom salts are really good for easing muscle pain. Add 2 cups of Epsom salts to a bath and soak for at least 12 minutes two or three times a week. Buy the best grade you can find from a chemist or online. I found Elixir Epsom Salts BP FCC Food Grade from Amazon the cheapest and best, at time of going to print.

<http://amzn.to/18UOHll>

Aroma-bath

Try an aroma-bath with a few drops of some relaxing essential oils. Try this recipe, add to the running water:

- 3 drops lavender essential oil
- 3 drops clary sage essential oil
- 3 drops Roman chamomile essential oil

Buy pure essential oils from Baldwins:

<http://www.baldwins.co.uk>

Bedtime

Aromatherapy for peaceful sleep

Lavender essential oil is especially useful for inducing a deep sense of peace and relaxation. Put a few drops of lavender oil on a cotton handkerchief or tissue placed under your pillowslip. The fragrance will help to lull you into sleep.

Can't sleep? Worries at night?

Before you go to bed, write anything that concerns you on a slip of paper and put it in a 'worry drawer', preferably not in the bedroom. So when you close the bedroom door, you leave your worries well behind.

If you wake, tell yourself there's no need to think about any of your worries now, you are safe in bed and now is the time for sleep.

Cont'd

Bedtime Cont'd

Tell yourself that after a good night's sleep you will be ready to deal with the worries tomorrow and that daytime is the best time for decision making. This will help your mind to rest and relax into sleep.

See 'Notebooks' below for a good idea for a calm and peaceful mind before sleep.

Try Jan Sadler's A Good Night's Sleep Book, CD or Download.

<http://painsupport.co.uk/shop/>

Notebooks

A notebook and a pencil are wonderful 'tools'. Researchers have discovered that people who keep a notebook of events and incidents each day feel as though they are more in control of their lives. They also found they are very much happier than those who do not.

You could use the notebook for:

- Jotting down your thoughts and feelings during the day.
- Ideas for future or ongoing projects.
- Commitments you make.
- Things you need to do.
- Things you would like to do.
- And most importantly, all and any 'good' or enjoyable things that happen each day. Use the book as a treasure trove of positive sayings, events, thoughts, observations, etc. At bedtime, re-read them or re-imagine at least three things from your day. This is a great tip for a peaceful mind and to fall asleep easily.

Distraction methods

Take regular breaks during the day. Spend 5-10 minutes to read something uplifting or humorous, or chat with a friend. Small breaks help to prevent your mind and body from becoming fatigued, a major source of stress.

One of the best ways to deal with pain or a stressful situation is to find an activity that distracts your attention. Almost anything you find captivating will take your attention away from the pain or stress. Your personal distraction could be anything, such as baking, painting, reading, writing, a crossword or Sudoku, gardening, sewing, etc. etc. It doesn't matter what it is provided you are totally engrossed in doing it.

It's a proven fact that soothing music can be distracting and relaxing. The type of music you choose is entirely up to you. Buy a CD or cassette featuring soft, modern ballads, gentle classics, smooth jazz, or New Age music. When you feel stressed, pop the music into the player and let the music carry you away – or if you prefer, choose something loud and lively.



Therapies

There are all kinds of different therapies you could try, ranging from the 'hands on' acupuncture to osteopathy and chiropractic to help with your emotions and thoughts such as psychotherapy and cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT). If a therapy appeals to you, make sure you get on well with the therapist and that they are properly qualified. You can search for this sort of information on the internet. If something isn't working for you after about six sessions, it probably won't help.

<http://painsupport.co.uk/help-advice/therapies/>

Useful Download Printables - Free

Your Toolkit

A most helpful outline of the various methods of pain management, such as pacing, relaxation, etc.

<http://painsupport.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/toolkit.pdf>

'How to Find a Diagnosis', tips to read and also a checklist for you to complete

<http://painsupport.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/diagnostictipsandchecklist.pdf>

Pain Logs

Print as many copies as you need of each log. It's helpful to complete each record for about a week. The pain log might be just for your own personal interest or perhaps to show to your doctor/therapist/family/friends to help them understand how your pain affects you and how it affects your daily life.

1. The Pain Levels log below will be a record of your actual pain level. Print as many copies as you need.

<http://painsupport.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/painlevelslog.pdf>

2. The Pain, Feelings and Activity log below will help you to discover how your activities and feelings may affect your pain. Print as many copies as you need.

<http://painsupport.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/painfeelingsandactivitylog.pdf>

'Affirmations/Mood Changers/Feel-good Words' - worksheet

<http://painsupport.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/feelgoodwords.pdf>

How to be as Well as Possible - Every Day - worksheet

<http://painsupport.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/needtodo3.pdf>

Relaxation Collection 1. Visualisation & relaxation techniques

<http://painsupport.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/relax1.pdf>

Relaxation Collection 2. Relaxation & relief from stress

<http://painsupport.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/relax2.pdf>

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PainSupport

Useful Download Printables - Free, Cont'd

Step 1 of your goals. Your 'To Do' worksheet

<http://painsupport.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/MyToDoList.pdf>

Step 2 of your goals. Your 'Goal Achiever' worksheet

<http://painsupport.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/smallstepstogoal.pdf>

Useful PainSupport website links

Contact Club - find friends

<http://painsupport.co.uk/forums-clubs/>

Discussion Forum – ask questions, find answers, get support

<http://painsupport.co.uk/forums-clubs/>

PainSupport Shop for Books, CDs and Downloads by Jan Sadler

<http://painsupport.co.uk/shop>

And finally...

Things WILL get better for you

We can't promise to take all the pain away but we can show you how you how to improve the way you feel and your ability to cope.

There is plenty of support, advice and help for you, on the PainSupport website.

www.painsupport.co.uk