

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a thick, dark rope. The person is wearing a blue shirt. The background shows a body of water with sunlight reflecting off the surface, and a house with a green roof and white walls on the shore. The sky is clear and blue.

Anchors Aweigh

Top 5 Things To
Consider When
Contemplating A Self
Care Pain Plan

Pain 2 Possibilities

Top 5 Things To Consider When Starting a Self Care Pain Plan

You have been doing some thinking and you believe you are ready for more when it comes to managing your chronic pain. Well, I am glad you're here because,

- a) it is not always easy to come to this conclusion when pain is beating down your door and
- b) I am excited to tell you that there is more...much more you can do to gain back some control of your persistent pain where you can live alongside it rather than being dictated by it.

It will take time, practice and a whole lot of patience and maybe even at some point, a personalized plan on how to best deal with the good days, the bad days and everything in between.

Out Of The Trenches & Taking A Birds Eye View

1. Coming out of the trenches and taking a birds eye view - Constantly chasing appointments and remedies to help you narrow in on your pain can make you feel like you are living in the trenches. Pain does that to the human spirit, it forces us to take more of a tunnel vision with our head down as we try to eradicate the pain and chase the next best thing. Now that you have come to the realization that you have the power to do more, as opposed to just relying on the protocol the Doctor has given you then it is time to get to work. By broadening your perspective we can take more of a birds eye view of your pain journey to assess if you are capturing a more robust view by taking advantage of a few different pain management model. And it all starts with a deeper understanding of your pain.

Understanding Your Pain

Now that you are ready to lift the anchor and set sail on the high seas you will need to understand pain in broader terms...’tacking’ away from the idea that pain is purely physical and lean into the proven notion that pain is both physical AND emotional. For more on this watch this [video here](#)

Fill The Holes In The Roof

You may have heard the analogy before where you know you have a leaky roof and that there are likely lots of holes to fill. The question becomes, which holes are most important to fill and in what order? As you have some experience in your pain management journey, you have likely already been through much of this. I mention this approach simply to take away some of the overwhelm when it comes to making decisions around your self care. By getting strategic and prioritizing which holes to fill based on what has the biggest impact makes the decision making much easier. This is also a gentle reminder that you do not have to fill in all the holes right away, just the ones that actually leak (so to speak).

Creating Space Between A Reaction & A Response

Understanding that with time, practice and specific tool sets you can learn how to create a larger space between a *pain reaction* and a *pain response*.

Our go-to pain reaction when the pain dial is up is typically this...our pain voice starts to get louder saying that the pain 'is going to be really bad' which then leads to our brains thinking 'I won't be able to handle this' and then our physical response is musculoskeletal hyper-vigilance which ultimately increases the pain. But what if we could instead take a moment to convince our bodies and our brain that a pain response would be far healthier. A pain response could be our inner voice suggesting that 'I know this pain is big today, but I have done this before and I will do it again' or 'I have a strategy in place to take care of my pain when the pain is high'. We do know that the gap does exist, it just becomes smaller and smaller with chronic pain. As I mentioned earlier, with time, practice and the right tools you can negotiate and create more space between the reaction and the response.

Get Strategic

The more strategic we can get when making decisions around your pain management plan the better. Not only is a strategy important in moving the needle slowly forward, it is also key when the pain becomes unbearable. Having a pain flair strategy along with a pain care strategy is like being prepared for any natural disaster. They are the steps you will take to help turn your pain dial down. So how do you get more strategic in your approach?

Strategy cont...

First step is to get clear and write it down. For example start brainstorming ideas of how you can self soothe when the pain begins to swell. Write down as many examples that you can think of that will help you in that moment. Then begin to identify what might create a spike in your pain. If you are able to articulate what creates more pain then we can counterbalance it with something that will help dial down the pain. For example, if you know that having a conversation with your Mother-in-law usually creates a spike of pain then plan ahead and put some time aside after the phone call to have a warm bath to help soothe the mind and relax the nervous system.