How to Create a Daily Plan for Pain

by ANGELA FINLAY

Good Recording Means Greater Control Over Pain

The right tools will help you to take control of your chronic pain and teach you to adapt your emotional and physical responses for less discomfort. Positive thinking is the key to gaining control so your plan should be proactive rather than reactive. In other words, learning to predict pain, prepare helpful responses, and focus on your abilities rather than your challenges will lead to a less painful and more fulfilling life. Are you ready to start your daily plan for pain? Continue reading on.

Record Details in a Diary

Tracking your pain requires attention to detail and diligent recording in a pain diary. You'll be able to predict when your pain will be better or worse and how to better control the consequences once you get into the habit of jotting down things like:

- **Events that trigger painful episodes.** After a week or two, you might find that there are specific events that lead straight to painful episodes. Even if you cannot completely avoid those events right away, it's helpful to be able to mentally and physically prepare for them.
- **Patterns of pain.** Time of day, activities and emotions can affect the way you experience and perceive pain. The more detailed you get, the more easily you can pinpoint important patterns that will influence treatment.
- **Type, length and strength of pain.** Be specific about where you feel the pain and how long it lasts. You may find that you experience different sorts of pain in different situations, and the same treatment method may not work for every occasion.
- **How best to calm the pain.** From medication to meditation, there are many methods to fight pain. No one method will work for everyone, but the more you try, the quicker you'll find something that fits with your lifestyle. Be sure to record the methods that help and those that don't.

Whether it's kicking an unhealthy habit or developing a new, healthy one, studies show that daily journals or diaries can drastically increase your chances of success. But your pain journal isn't a final solution; you will need to incorporate it into a wider pain management system.

How to Manage your Pain Plan

An effective pain management plan should make use of the information you collect in your pain diary to help you predict and prepare for painful episodes. There will be times when you are simply too tired, frustrated or distracted by your pain to think about the most effective response, so keep these visual tools close by:

- A schedule for your medication and therapeutic activities.
- A step-by-step checklist to handle flare-ups efficiently.
- A list of contacts you can count on for emotional and physical support.

- A list of fun hobbies or little activities that offer helpful distraction.
- A personal mantra or positive reminder to keep your spirits up.

Along with good preparation, some basic approaches to health can bring noticeable improvements for chronic pain sufferers. Better sleep habits, regular exercise and a balanced diet can reduce discomfort and naturally enhance mood, which will impact the way you experience your pain.

Chronic pain can be frustrating and isolating but try not to turn away from the people around you. It’s important to use all the resources at your disposal if you want to improve your quality of life: family, friends and trusted doctors can make it easier to handle the bad days and help to keep you focused on your goals. Routines are important, but so is flexibility, so reassess your plan regularly with help from your doctor and be open to new approaches.