



NON-PHARMACOLOGICAL APPROACHES
TO
PAIN MANAGEMENT

A Recreational Therapy Perspective

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June 2003



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Recreation - Some Tips and Techniques for Managing Pain

Pain: Acute versus chronic pain.

Acute pain generally is the result of a specific disease, inflammation or injury to tissues. Typically, acute pain comes on quickly and may also be linked to anxiety and/or emotional distress. By definition, acute pain usually only occurs for a limited period of time and a limited degree of severity. The cause of acute pain is fairly easy to diagnose and treat. In some instances, acute pain may evolve into chronic pain. Generally, pain is the body's way of signaling that there is a problem that needs attending to and once the problem has been addressed and dealt with appropriately the pain goes away.

Chronic pain is persistent pain that lasts for weeks, months and even years. There may have been an initial cause from which the person has long since recovered or there may not be any evidence as to the original source of pain. What is true is that the pain is unrelenting and it is real. With chronic pain, the body keeps sending pain signals even though there is not evidence of a problem. What happens is that pain becomes the overwhelming problem. Frequently the chronic pain leads to what clinicians refer to as the "terrible triad" of suffering, sleeplessness, and sadness. Older adults are particularly vulnerable to chronic pain. Pain is the number one complaint among older adults and nearly 60% of older adults are taking pain medications. Now, more than ever, as the population of older adults increases significantly and that people are living longer, attention needs to be focused upon a better understanding of chronic pain and more effective treatments.

As the health care service delivery system is beginning to adopt an expanded view of health, we are beginning to realize that attention must not only be directed at physiological aspects of health and the necessary treatment procedures for addressing conditions such as chronic pain but also that it is important to consider and provide alternative treatments that focus upon psychosocial and environmental factors that affect persons who experience chronic pain.

Recreation interventions and techniques have proven to be beneficial in reducing the debilitating effects of chronic pain and helping persons to achieve a sense of well-being and control to the quality of their lives.

Laughter

Dr. Norman Cousins in his book Anatomy of an Illness (1991) was able to demonstrate the healing power of humor in curing his own catastrophic illness. Dr. Cousins spent time each day watching "Abbott and Costello movies". It is clear that "laughter is the best medicine" or at least can help when it comes to relieving pain symptoms. When we laugh for a prolonged period of time and laugh hard (belly laughs) our body releases chemicals called endorphins that act like "natural opiates" to the body so the pain severity actually diminishes and even disappears for a period of time.

Suggestions:

- Set aside some time each day, every other day, or each week for some "laugh time" and watch videos, DVDs, old movies, television shows or listen to tapes- start developing a laughter collection of your favorites.
 - The library has lots of materials so do the video stores.
 - Some suggestions:

Abbott and Costello	MASH
Burns and Allen	All in the Family
Groucho Marx	Johnny Carson
Steve Allen	Candid Camera
Mel Brooks	Funniest Home Videos
Monty Python	I Love Lucy
George Carlin	The Honeymooners
Bill Cosby	Golden Girls
Martin & Lewis	The Three Stooges
The Little Rascals	Jack Benny
Benny Hill	The Carol Burnett Show
Joan Rivers	Laugh In
Lily Tomlin	Seinfeld
- Whatever comedian or movie or TV show or other source makes you laugh.
- Read and collect jokes, cartoons, share jokes and humorous stories
 - Take time to laugh!

Stress Management

Stress is a normal part of life. There are different types of stressors, some are positive and some are negative but they all affect the body in the same way. Usually stress is helpful in contributing to our ability to react to any change that requires us to adjust or respond. Our responses to change can be physical, emotional, or mental.

If stress continues for a prolonged period of time without any relief from the “stressor”, it may lead to a “negative stress reaction” or distress. Distress can upset the body’s balance or equilibrium and lead to physical symptoms such as headache, upset stomach, chest pain, elevated blood pressure, and problems with sleeping. For persons with chronic pain, stress contributes to a decrease tolerance for pain and can also contribute to depression and feelings of hopelessness. There is also an expanding body of evidence to support that stress can bring on or actually worsen certain symptoms or diseases.

It is important for persons who experience pain to learn to manage their stress.
Suggestions:

- Keep a positive attitude (You have a choice regarding how you view your life).
- Accept that there are things that happen that are beyond your control
- Express yourself. It is important to talk about your feelings and not keep things bottled up inside. You can also express yourself through art, music or creative activities.
- Exercise – there are countless studies that support the benefits of physical activity in reducing pain and stress. The more fit a person is the better able they are to fight stress.
- Have a balance of rest time and sleep time – not too much, not too little. The body needs rest to be able to recover from the effects of stress.
- Be with people – having people to socialize with and be supportive is important to relieving stress.
- Learn and practice relaxations techniques.
- Post positive quotes or affirmations on your mirror as a daily reminder.
- Pick a positive quote or joke of the day.
- Select a daily reading from Self-Help books/daily affirmation books available at the library or local bookstore.
- Carry a worry stone or crystal in your pocket.
- Watch little children at play.
- Listen to soothing/relaxing music
- Learn Tai Chi

Relaxation

Relaxation techniques can help to reduce stress and relieve pain. To learn how to relax, it is important to become aware of your breathing patterns. Your breathing is often disrupted by emotional changes. If you are anxious, you tend to hold your breath and/or breathe more rapidly. If you are depressed, you tend to sigh and breathe shallowly.

When participating in relaxation techniques, it is very important that these are done in a quiet location that has no distractions. It is also important to be in a comfortable body position, and to try to clear your mind of any worries or distracting thoughts.

Suggestions:

Breathing Techniques

- **Rhythmic breathing** – If your breathing is short or hurried, try to slow it down by taking long, slow breaths. Inhale slowly then exhale slowly. Count slowly to five as you inhale, and then count slowly to five as you exhale. As you exhale, pay attention to how your body naturally relaxes. If you can recognize this change (your body relaxing), it will help you to relax even more.
- **Deep breathing** – Imagine a spot below your belly button. Breathe into that spot, filling up your abdomen with air. Let the air fill you from the abdomen up, then let it out like a balloon deflating. With every long, slow exhalation, you should feel more relaxed.
- **Visualized breathing** – Find a comfortable place where you can close your eyes, and combine slowed breathing with your imagination. Picture relaxation entering your body and tension leaving your body. Breathe deeply, in a natural rhythm. Visualize your breath coming into your nostrils, going into your lungs, expanding your chest and abdomen. Then visualize your breath going out from your abdomen to your chest to your lungs and through your nostrils. Continue breathing, each time imagine that you are breathing in more relaxation. Each time you exhale, imagine that you are getting rid of more tension. You can also make the following statement as you breathe in and out:
 - *Breathing in, I know that I am breathing in*
Breathing out, I know that I am breathing out
Breathing in, I become aware of the pain in my physical body
Breathing out, I let go of my attachment to that pain
Breathing in, I accept the moment as it is
*Breathing out, I recognize the peace within me**

(Adapted from Thich Nat Hahn, Being Peace.)

Other Relaxation Techniques

- **Progressive muscle relaxation** – Start by using the breathing techniques that you have learned and switch your thoughts to yourself and your breathing. Take a few deep breaths, exhale slowly. Now mentally scan your body. Notice any areas that are tense, cramped and/or painful. Quickly loosen up those areas. Let go of as much tension as you can. You can start with your toes and curl them and release them a few times. Rotate your feet and ankles, slowly, a few times. Point your toes out and then point them up a few times. Bend your knees and then straighten your legs slowly. Tighten your buttocks and then release slowly. Tighten your stomach muscles and abdomen and then release slowly. Breathe in deep raising your chest and then exhale slowly. Clench and release your hands, stretch out and release your fingers. Flex the muscles in your arms and then release slowly. Rotate your shoulders gently forward and backwards a few times. Rotate your head in a gentle circular motion a few times. Let all your muscles completely relax. Think of a pleasant thought for a few seconds. Take another deep breath in and exhale slowly. You should feel relaxed. **STOP ANY MOVEMENTS IN THE PROCESS THAT CAUSE YOU PAIN!**
- **Relax to Music** – Combine relaxation techniques with your favorite music playing in the background. Select music that lifts up your mood or use music that is soothing or calming. There are also lots of relaxation tapes that are available that can guide you through some of these relaxation techniques. Check your local library or music store for these.
- **Guided Imagery** – Guided imagery has proven to be a very effective technique for relaxation and pain management. It helps to create harmony between the mind and body. Guided imagery coaches you in creating calm peaceful images in your mind – you create a “mental escape” that is peaceful, warm and relaxing. You begin by identifying negative self-talk and develop positive self-talk. By making affirmations frequently throughout the day, you counteract the impact of negative thoughts. Some suggestions of affirmations are as follows:
 - **“I can let go of things I cannot control”**
 - **“I am healthy, vital, and strong”**
 - **“There is nothing that I cannot handle”**
 - **“All my needs are met”**
 - **“I am completely and utterly safe”**
 - **“Every day in every way I am getting better and stronger”**
 - **Imagine yourself lying on the warm sand of the beach on a nice sunny day. Listen to the gentle sounds of the waves as they hit the shoreline or imagine yourself laying on the soft ground in the woods, listen to the breeze as it blows warmly through the trees, listen to the sounds of a brook nearby as the water passes over the loose stones, look up at the big puffy clouds as they drift slowly overhead.**

As with relaxation to music, there are numerous video and audiotapes available that can help to teach the process of guided imagery. It is a very powerful tool in alleviating pain.

- **Reiki** – Reiki is an intervention that is used by practitioners who have been trained to apply the techniques. It is a non-invasive approach where the practitioner places his/her hands upon certain areas of the body. Reiki can be traced back thousands of years and is based on the notion that by applying touch to areas of the body can actually stimulate the flow of energy in a person to promote healing. It actually is based upon some principles of quantum physics and is gaining greater acceptance within the scientific and medical communities as a legitimate method to reduce pain

and promote healing. Reiki has been shown to be effective in the treatment of acute problems such as migraines, sprains, burns, broken bones etc. Persons with more severe or chronic ailments can supplement traditional treatment regimes with continue to have orthodox treatment with Reiki to improve their chances of recovery, boost the immune system and reduce the side - effects of any drugs or chemotherapy. Additionally, Reiki can be used as a modality in palliative care as it is an effective technique in reducing pain and alleviating fear of death.

There is a tremendous body of evidence in nursing and medical literature that supports and substantiates the benefits of touch in healing and alleviating pain.

Suggestions:

- **Check out resources at your local library on the therapeutic benefits of touch and on specific techniques such as Reiki**
- **Contact local wellness organizations or programs to identify persons trained in Reiki.**
- **There is information available on the Internet on a variety of Complementary Medicine, Integrative Medicine or Holistic Medicine that have links to various organizations and practitioners.**

Aromatherapy

Over the past five years, aromatherapy has been increasingly used as part of an integrated, multidisciplinary approach to pain management. The effects of touch and smell involved in aromatherapy are acknowledged to affect the parasympathetic nervous system to a level that can induce a deep state of relaxation, and this, in turn, can alter patients' perceptions of pain.

Specific aromatherapy essential oils have also been shown to contain pharmacologically active ingredients which can enhance the benefits for chronic pain sufferers. For instance, it is well known - and many over-the-counter topical treatments for pain management contain menthol or capsaicin (a substance found in oil from capsicum peppers). There is also evidence to support that lavender and peppermint oils are also beneficial in reducing pain levels.

Clinical trials are in the early stages, but evidence, so far, suggests that aromatherapy might be used as a complementary therapy for managing chronic pain. Although the use of aromatherapy is not restricted to nursing, at least one US state board of nursing has recognized the therapeutic value of aromatherapy and voted to accept it as part of holistic nursing care.

(Source: Use of aromatherapy as a complementary treatment for chronic pain.
Buckle J
Altern Ther Health Med, 5:42-51, 1999 Sep)

****There are certain chronic illnesses and/or conditions that are contraindicated for using aroma therapy and should therefore be avoided. These conditions include:**

- ❖ Asthma, respiratory allergies, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Certain volatile oils may lead to airway spasms
- ❖ Skin allergies. Some oils may contribute to skin irritation particularly on areas near the eyes, nose and mouth.
- ❖ In general oils should not be used near the face, eyes or mouth as not only can oils irritate the skin but also the membranes in those areas.

Suggestions:

- It is important to check with a physician first when using this intervention and obtain physician orders.
- There are some health care providers who are trained in using aromatherapy techniques e.g. massage therapists, nurses, and counselors. It would be important to consult with them or contact them before establishing this type of program
- Exercise extreme caution if using this technique.

Exercise and Stretching

Our bodies are designed to move. It is important for us to change positions throughout the day. Also, our bodies are built to be upright and aligned so it is always important to be aware of posture and body mechanics in performing any activity. It is lack of movement and physical activity that can cause more problems that impact pain tolerance. There are multiple health benefits that can be attributed to physical activity and exercise. For persons, who have pain, it is important to participate in a program that is designed specifically to address the type of pain that is related to their condition. For example, for persons who experience arthritis pain and/or joint pain or fibromyalgia, the appropriate forms of exercise are:

Suggestions:

- Range of motion exercises to help maintain normal joint motion and relieve stiffness (e.g. dance, T'ai Chi). This type of exercise also helps to maintain or increase flexibility.
- Strengthening exercises (e.g. weight training) help to maintain or increase strength. Strengthening the muscles around the joints affected protects and provides more support for the joint.
- Low Impact Aerobic or endurance exercises (e.g. cycling) improve cardiovascular fitness, help to control weight, and improve overall physical functioning. Some studies indicate that aerobic exercise can also decrease inflammation. Additionally, weight control is important because it reduces the burden of weight on joints.
- The Arthritis Foundation has Chapters throughout the country that sponsor an exercise program called the PACE Program. This program consists of a series of exercises for persons with arthritis. Often this land exercise program is also combined with the Arthritis Foundation's Aquatic Exercise program.

Yoga has also proven to be a significant approach to pain relief as not only does it incorporate gentle stretching movements and positional changes but is also beneficial in mind focusing so that mind does not pay attention to pain signals.

For other types of pain, i.e. low back pain, the types of exercises that are helpful are stretching, strengthening, and low impact aerobic exercise. Some examples of exercises for low back pain are:

Suggestions:

- Partial sit ups
- Wall Exercises
- Leg Raises
- Extension exercises to strengthen lower back muscles and stretch the stomach muscles
- Flexion exercises which strengthen the abdominal muscles and stretch the muscles in the back
- Aerobic exercises include walking, swimming, running, and biking. Non-weight-bearing exercises, such as swimming and biking, tend to be better choices if you have back pain.
- Strength training programs using low weights such as "Strength for Full Life" can be very beneficial.

For persons who experience pain from other diseases or illnesses i.e. cancer. Pain from cancer may be linked to actual tissue damage (nociceptive pain) or neurological

(neuropathic pain) walking or movement is helpful to literally keep “things” moving, guided imagery and diversion is also an effective technique to get the person to focus on something other than their pain. Also some of the previously mentioned relaxation techniques are helpful in alleviating pain.

For anyone who is starting up in any type of exercise program, it is most important to start slowly. Check with your physician before starting any program. Respect pain! If you experience pain for more than two hours after exercising or performing an activity, you have probably done too much. Next time, spend less time performing the activity or use adaptive equipment that can help to support you during participation.

Aquatics

The benefits of water in alleviating pain are far reaching and well documented. Water eliminates the effects of gravity upon the body. Water minimizes stress on muscles and joints and reduces pain. A person does not need to be able to swim to obtain benefit from aquatics. Simply standing in the water and performing stretching exercises, range of motion exercises, walking and moving against the water can be beneficial and help to alleviate pain. For persons who have multiple sclerosis, being in a cool water environment can help because water is more efficient than air in drawing heat away from the body and therefore the person does not fatigue as quickly. For persons with arthritis, warm water can relieve joint stiffness and help to increase joint mobility.

In general, warm water helps to increase flexibility, decrease pain, decrease muscle spasm, and increase circulation. Here are some specific tips to consider in getting involved in an aquatics program:

Suggestions:

- Look for a community pool that is easy to get in and out of. Many public pools have lifts or ramps with handrails for greater accessibility. If not, ask if a portable lift can be added.
- Check the water temperature. For people with MS, cooler is better -- 78-82 F is ideal for exercise, but warmer temps of 85-86 F degrees are fine for stretching. For people with spinal cord injuries who may get chilled easily, warmer water -- 92-94 F -- is best. For persons with arthritis or fibromyalgia, a water temperature of 83-88 F is recommended.
- For persons who have arthritis pain, the Arthritis Foundation has Chapters throughout the country that sponsor the Arthritis Foundation Aquatics Program. This program is taught by an instructor who is certified by the Arthritis Foundation after successfully completing a specialized training program that emphasizes techniques and exercises that can be done in the water.
- Start slowly. Try exercising or stretching for 15-20 minute sessions, until your body gets used to it. Remember, it's easy to over exert yourself in the water.
- Never exercise to the point of pain.
- Drink plenty of water after exercising.

Program Participation (Cognitive Restructuring and Diversion)

As noted in the section on guided imagery, a very powerful technique to helping people manage pain is to get the person to focus on something positive. Recreation activities by definition help persons to suspend the realities of everyday life by being engaged in activities that are stimulating, meaningful, satisfying and positive. By providing people with opportunities to focus attention on an activity or an experience it provides a diversion from pain. Cognitive restructuring involves rethinking and reframing how we view things. In other words, it entails getting people to shape their attitude and focus positively.

Suggestions:

- As noted above, use techniques to help you think positively.
- Adopt a personal mantra i.e. "I am a wonderful person", "I am getting better and stronger everyday", etc. Repeat this phrase over and over throughout the day. Resources to help identify affirmations include Affirmations for Living Beyond Cancer (Siegel, 1999) and Affirmations for Getting Well Again (Simonton, 1996).
- Participate in activities that are lively and stimulating to you whether it is something active or something mentally stimulating. Sometimes just working on a crossword puzzle or jigsaw puzzle can take your mind off of your pain.

Pets

Currently, there are a number of studies that support the benefits of having pets. Research has proven that people who have pets i.e. cats and dogs have reduced blood pressure. Pets also provide companionship, comfort, and unconditional acceptance. Studies also indicate that pets are more effective with persons who have had pets throughout their lifetime than trying to introduce pets later in life to persons who did not have pets.

There are also studies to indicate the benefits of animal assisted treatment to reduce pain. The studies have demonstrated that when an animal is present during a painful procedure or treatment, a person is more able to tolerate the treatment and the pain because they are not focusing upon the procedure but rather focusing on the animal. Animal assisted treatment has also helped people to improve in areas such as range of motion. It is more appealing to groom a pet than it is to simply practice range of motion exercises.

Suggestions:

- Adopt a pet – cats are easiest to maintain but more independent than dogs. There are a number of rescue organizations for specific breeds i.e. Golden Retrievers, Greyhounds, feline rescue organizations that would gladly place an appropriate animal for adoption.
- Get help from a professional in selecting an animal for involvement at a facility because it is important to screen the animal for health, temperament, history and obedience. It is important to identify the needs and demands of the people with whom the animal will be interacting in order to make an appropriate match.
- If it is not feasible to adopt a pet – arrange with the local humane society to have animal visits. Be certain that the animals that are involved in such a program are healthy, well trained and have good temperaments.
- Arrange for a trained certified individual to provide animal assisted treatment when appropriate. “Paws with a Cause”, the “Delta Society” and other organizations have local chapters and are a good resource. Animal facilitated treatment is a positive adjunct to traditional therapy programs.

Music

Music is an ancient art form that has been used for centuries to promote physical and emotional healing. Currently, many healthcare organizations have implemented music therapy as complement to traditional medical techniques. The use of music in healthcare is an attempt to bring harmony back into the whole self by eliminating that which is causing disharmony (DeRungs, 1986). For persons who have pain whether it is acute or chronic pain, music can be a powerful distraction, turning attention away from the pain and also promoting relaxation. Music competes with pain signals to the brain and can cause a decrease in pain intensity as well as a distraction from the pain signals.

Music can be used in conjunction with pain medication as a way of alleviating a person's suffering. For some persons who are in severe discomfort, music may be annoying because the person is unable to focus or attend to the music. A technique called "guided listening" (having the person listen for certain themes, lyrics, or other musical elements) may help to provide the necessary structure to which a person can respond. There is a growing body of evidence that indicates participation in music programs that are specifically designed to address pain symptoms have resulted in a decrease in the use of pain medications. It is important to let the person choose their own music to contribute to their pain relief.

Additionally, there are numerous studies linking benefits of listening to music and natural sounds to stress management and relaxation. The late jazz performer, Louis Armstrong left monies in his estate to support research documenting the benefits of music and healing. Specific research has been conducted to indicate the benefits of music in treating cancer pain and contributing to healing. There has been research that demonstrates generally that participation in music making e.g. group drumming can enhance healing and decrease pain. Music making in the form of group drumming provides an enjoyable, empowering, accessible, practical and affordable approach which may facilitate relief among persons who experience chronic pain.

As with music, art can also be a beneficial modality that provides pain relief again because the focus of attention for the individual is centered on the project or task as opposed to the pain signals.

Suggestions:

- Contact the local chapter of the American Music Therapy Association to identify music therapists in your area who may be available for programming or consultation.
- Identify the music preferences of clients and develop a music listening library.
- Uses listening devices with headsets to screen out facility/environmental noise and distractions
- Create a music listening room that is quiet and or soundproof where persons can go to relax and enjoy
- Consult with a music therapist to develop a guided listening program for persons who are in severe pain
- Bring in members from local "drumming" groups to demonstrate programs
- Start a group drumming program within the facility
- Check out local resources at the library or in the local community that offer such programs
- There are resources available on the Internet on drumming circles throughout the country.
- Be open to the possibilities!

Body Mechanics and Positioning for Recreation Involvement

Our bodies are designed to move. Our bodies are also designed to be held and maintained in an upright and neutral posture. If one has practiced good body mechanics, maintained strength and flexibility, been physically active and had good posture throughout one's life, then the person is less likely to experience back pain, joint pain and/or other types of positional pain. Unfortunately, over 60 % of all adults experience some type of back pain. Using proper body mechanics, therefore, is a way to prevent further injury and pain. All recreational activities whether active or sedentary require that a person maintain a particular body position. It is important to encourage people to use good body mechanics and assume neutral posture during stationary positions and/or dynamic movement. It is also important to encourage people to change positions frequently. Holding a static position for a long period of time can result in an increase in pain and stiffness and can also lead to other problems such as decreased circulation and skin breakdown.

Some general suggestions for good body mechanics and proper positioning are:

- Use good posture – good posture is when your ears, shoulders, pelvis, knees and ankles are in a straight line. Neutral posture is positioning your body in a comfortable position that combines flexion and extension of various body parts.
- Active sitting posture – sit at the edge of a chair with knees at a right angle, feet flat on the floor, abdominal muscles tight to prevent slumping. It is important to change position frequently when sitting.
- Your head and neck follow your eyes so it is important to have reading materials or items that you are looking at for a prolonged period (i.e. Television) at eye level keeping the head and chin up, ears and shoulders in alignment and bending at the hips.
- If you are right handed place the telephone on the left side of a desk or table and use your left hand to answer it, this frees your right hand to be able to write instead of propping the phone between your ear and shoulder and vice versa if you are left handed.
- When standing it is important to place feet shoulder distance apart to establish a good base of support. Keep hips and shoulders in alignment and avoid twisting the body. Stand with a slight pelvic tilt to help keep the back straight.
- Passive sitting – sit evenly on your butt. Knees should be level with the hips. The mid to low back should be supported or at least kept in a neutral position not arching the back. Use a pillow or rolled up towel to support your lower back if necessary. Use a good light source and do not lean into the light source. Keep feet flat on the floor. Don't cross your legs!
- Participate in stretching, toning, and strengthening exercises. Strengthening exercises can help build and/or tone muscles that support the trunk and spine and keep the body in good alignment.
- Consult with a physician and/or physical therapist for more information

Adaptive Equipment

There are multiple commercially produced products available today to make life easier for persons who have pain which limits their everyday activities. The Arthritis Foundation is an excellent resource for products for persons who have joint related pain. In addition, medical equipment suppliers or supply catalogues also have extensive resources on adaptive equipment and/or assistive devices that can make life a little easier. OXO International (1-800-488-5592) has a line of "Good Grasp" products for the home that are ergonomically designed and are available in kitchen and housewares stores/departments. *The Sharper Image catalogue* has a variety of gadgets that are designed to make life easier. It is also important to note that although there are many commercially produced products available, there are also devices that can be adapted with a little ingenuity and creativity. It is best to make the product fit you as opposed to you trying to fit the product.

As for recreation specific devices here are some suggestions:

- Writing – there are lots of products to help you to hold pens and pencils more easily. If all else fails, you can simply build up the barrel of a pen or pencil by wrapping it with adhesive tape or moleskin to build up the thickness so that it is easier to grasp.
- Talking on the phone – using headsets or speaker phones eliminate the need to hold the phone and allows you to sit in a comfortable position.
- Playing Cards - Card Holders and card shufflers are available in many catalogues and in some stores. These holders allow the person who has problems grasping items to have the cards placed in a device so that they do not need to use their hands. Battery operated automatic shufflers are available that can shuffle the cards for you.
- Crafts Projects – there are magnifying devices as well as holding devices that are available through catalogues or in some stores as well.
- Fishing – Again, there are a variety of products to assist with holding rods, casting and reeling in the catch.
- Gardening – There are adaptive tools as well as pads, for kneeling. In addition, if a person is unable to bend or get down on the ground to garden, there are ways to improvise using container gardens that can be elevated on tables or stands.
- Reading – It is important to have good lighting so that a person is not positioning themselves in an improper way to be able to read text. Also, the use of magnifying lenses or large print help so that a person can hold a book at an appropriate level so that they are maintaining neutral body positions. There are also devices that can be set-up to hold books for a person who is unable to hold items for a prolonged period of time.

The above are merely a few examples. Some commercial catalogues that do contain some of these devices are as follows:

- Walter Drake, Drake Bldg, Colorado Springs, CO 80915
<http://www.wdrake.com>
- Lillian Vernon Corporation, 100 Lillian Vernon Drive, Virginia Beach, VA 23479-0002
<http://www.lillianvernon.com>
- Sammons Preston Rolyan – United States, 4 Sammons Court, Bolingbrook, IL, 60440
<http://ecom1.sammonspreston.com>
- Walter Nicke's Company, Topsfield, MA 01983 (gardening supplies)
<http://www.gardentalk.com>

Social Support

The Beatles produced a song called "I Get By With A Little Help From My Friends". That title is appropriate when we consider that people who experience pain can benefit tremendously by having some support in their lives. The first network of support that needs to exist is with family, friends, health care providers, caregivers and others. It is important that the person feels that the people around them understand their pain. It is helpful to share education regarding pain and pain management with the person's primary support group. The better informed the better they will be able to assist the person to cope with every day life. It may also be beneficial to some to seek external supports to help in coping i.e. support groups or counseling groups.

There is a growing body of medical literature which affirms that social support can be helpful to people dealing with their illnesses or conditions. Sometimes just talking with others who share the same experiences is beneficial as the person does not feel isolated and alone in their experience. There are a number of organizations that provide information and support to persons who have chronic pain.

Some suggestions of organizations for support are as follows

- American Pain Foundation, 201 North Charles St., Suite 710, Baltimore, MD 21201-4111
www.painfoundation.org
- National Pain Foundation, PO Box 102605, Denver, CO 80250-2605
www.painconnection.org
- National Chronic Pain Society, PO Box 903, Tomball, TX 77377-0903
www.paincare.org

Conclusion

This paper merely begins to scratch the surface in examining the role that recreation may play in assisting persons to manage pain in their life. Clearly, recreation can be a valuable treatment option to consider as a complement and adjunct to other treatment interventions. It is important to recognize that treatment for and relief from pain requires a multifaceted approach.

For further information regarding recreation's role as a treatment modality, please contact:

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