

SUPPORT METHODS TO KEEP YOU ON TRACK

There are a number of things you can do to keep you on track with your journey.

We've listed some below, but more help is available at: painkillersdontexist.com/support

PLAN OUT YOUR DAY

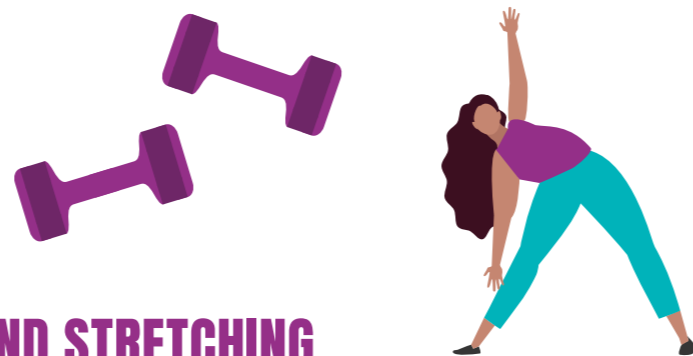
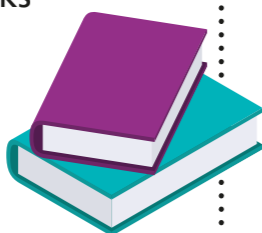
Setting yourself little targets every day can help keep you busy, but also gives you small manageable challenges, if your pain is chronic. Some examples:

- Make breakfast
- Do the ironing
- Meet a friend for lunch
- Go for a walk
- Always make time for breaks

RELAXATION SKILLS

To help with pain, relaxation methods could help relax those tense muscles:

- Reading
- Gardening
- Yoga
- Listening to music
- Meeting friends or family for a coffee
- Walking



EXERCISE AND STRETCHING

Some may dread the thought of exercise, but it can help with pain and discomfort. Exercise decreases pain and discomfort and can strengthen weak muscles.

Exercise is good for you because it helps:

- Improve flexibility
- Combat depression and anxiety
- Be more sociable
- With sleeping
- Improve and maintain good health



CELEBRATING SUCCESS

One of the most important parts of self help is celebrating how far you have come since starting your pill-free journey. Even if it's an increase from 500 steps to 1,000 steps a day, it's progress. Think about keeping a diary of how far you have come, daily or weekly, whatever works for you.

You might also find it useful to record setbacks, as well as successes, and how you managed to overcome them. The next section covers setbacks in more detail.

WHAT IF I OVER DO IT?

Everyone has setbacks, that's what makes us human. If you are an overachiever; it is easy to forget to pace yourself and you may experience a setback.

If this happens to you, don't panic. Have a setback plan ready to help you back on the right path.

Setbacks are usually caused by doing too much – overdoing it, pressure from others, or just forgetting you have a pain problem. Here are some steps to help when you have over done it and need support:

- Pace yourself
- Break up tasks into smaller portions
- Rest in between
- Reduce your activities until the set-back settles.
- Next time, do a shorter task to prevent the pain coming back or go slower
- Stretch
- You can always say 'no' if you don't feel physically up to doing something
- If it's muscular pain, apply heat and/or ice to the area
- Ask for help



**PAINKILLERS
DON'T EXIST.**
They're only a short-term solution

NHS
North East and
North Cumbria

MANAGING PAIN

A guide to your pain management review and advice on how to help you manage your pain

**HERE
TO
HELP**

HAVE YOU BEEN USING PAIN MEDICATION FOR MORE THAN 3 MONTHS?

..... **Book a pain review with your GP**

When you have your pain medication review appointment, you will go through the following steps and set goals along the way. Your clinician will discuss with you:

- How you have felt in the last couple of weeks/last few days
- How tolerable your pain has been in the last couple of weeks/last few days
- How your pain has affected your activity in the last couple of weeks/last few days
- Ask if you have had any problems or difficulties with areas such as walking, balance, side effects
- Agree steps, actions and review dates to support you on your journey



YOUR REVIEW, WHAT TO EXPECT

It's important to review your pain medication to see if it's working for you but also to ensure it's doing the job it was prescribed for. If it's not, then it might be time to start your journey to a pill-free life.

During your review, we will talk about your health, how you have been feeling, how your pain affects your activity, and we will agree on a plan to help you on your journey. It will be an ongoing process that needs to be managed. Some people may take longer than others to complete their journey as every individual is different.



We are committed to making sure your review is tailored to you and your needs and commit to:

- A named clinician will, as far as possible, supervise your care and prescriptions
- That clinician will produce a trial treatment plan
- We will review your medication regularly to see if this is effective. It is a trial of no longer than 3 months and we don't know if it will work
- To prescribe safely
- To stop medication if it doesn't help your pain
- To encourage self-care
- To refer you for further care if appropriate
- We will not respond to a request for replacement or increase in treatment if it isn't part of your plan

We ask that you take responsibility for:

- To keep your medication safe and away from children and vulnerable adults
- To let us know how you are getting on and what effect the treatment has on your pain. After all this is just a trial
- To try new things to reduce your pain such as CBT or exercise therapy
- To stick to the treatment plan agreed with your named clinician unless unavoidable
- To not ask for extra or early medication or seek to jump from clinician to clinician
- If the tablets are not working well to reduce and stop them with our help



SUPPORT TOOLS

We've listed below some apps, websites and links to help you on your journey. Meet other people experiencing similar conditions for support.

Sunderland Integrated Musculoskeletal Service
sunderlandims.co.uk

Sunderland Psychological wellbeing service
sunderlandiapt.co.uk

Mental wellness app
mypossibleself.com

Live well with pain
livewellwithpain.co.uk

British pain society
britishpainsociety.org/people-with-pain

Flippin pain
flippinpain.co.uk

NHS choices
nhs.uk/live-well/pain/ways-to-manage-chronic-pain

..... More information can be found at
painkillersdontexist.com/support

