

Being active with chronic pain

Chronic pain is more common than most people realise. It affects between 20-50% of people in the UK, although most are able to carry on with daily activities. For some the pain makes life difficult to manage and when this happens, it may be helpful to ask to be referred to a pain management clinic.

Here's how you can get started.

- > **Activity and exercise are helpful** for chronic pain conditions, but the exact type is not so important. *What is important is that the exercise you do is something you enjoy, and that you're able to do regularly.*
- > **It's more helpful to start off little and often** with any activity and gradually build up your ability and fitness levels.
- > **The pain may or may not change** with the exercise you choose to do, but you should notice that you are able to do more without the pain stopping you or flaring up afterwards. It's useful therefore to notice how your ability to do activity changes, rather than expecting the pain to reduce.
- > **Being part of a community is important** and activities that encourage you to get out and be with others are beneficial. There are many chronic pain groups in the local community that can help you build up your activity, and it may be helpful to connect with them.
- > **Exercise doesn't have to be about** going to a gym or joining a sports team. Think about other forms of activity that get you moving physically and that you enjoy, like gardening, dancing and even housework.
- > **Flare-ups in pain are normal.** The usual symptoms you experience may change from day to day, and there will be times when they increase. It is helpful to plan for these periods of flare-up so that you can manage through them and keep doing the things that are important to you.

For more ideas and advice, visit: www.csp.org.uk/activity