

THE AMERICAN CHRONIC PAIN ASSOCIATION

TO LEARN MORE

About how you can begin to enjoy a better quality of life in spite of pain, visit our web site (www.theacpa.org) or contact the ACPA at **1-800-533-3231**.

We can help you find a group in your area or start a group with information and support from the national office.



*Ten Steps From
Patient to Person*



American Chronic Pain Association

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American Chronic Pain Association

Ten Steps From Patient to Person

Making the journey from patient to person takes time. The isolation and fear that can overwhelm a person with chronic pain grows over time. And the return to a fuller, more rewarding life also takes time.

It's a journey with many phases. The ACPA describes these phases as Ten Steps.

The ACPA's Ten Steps For Moving From Patient To Person.

STEP 1: Accept the Pain

Learn all you can about your physical condition. Understand that there may be no current cure and accept that you will need to deal with the fact of pain in your life.

STEP 2: Get Involved

Take an active role in your own recovery. Follow your doctor's advice and ask what you can do to move from a passive role into one of partnership in your own health care.

STEP 3: Learn to Set Priorities

Look beyond your pain to the things that are important in your life. List the things that you would like to do. Setting priorities can help you find a starting point to lead you back into a more active life.

STEP 4: Set Realistic Goals

We all walk before we run. Set goals that are within your power to accomplish or break a larger goal down into manageable steps. And take time to enjoy your successes.

STEP 5: Know Your Basic Rights

We all have basic rights. Among these are the right to be treated with respect, to say no without guilt, to do less than humanly possible, to make mistakes, and to not need to justify your decisions, with words or pain.

STEP 6: Recognize Emotions

Our bodies and minds are one. Emotions directly affect physical well being. By acknowledging and dealing with your feelings, you can reduce stress and decrease the pain you feel.

STEP 7: Learn to Relax

Pain increases in times of stress. Relaxation exercises are one way of reclaiming control of your body. Deep breathing, visualization, and other relaxation techniques can help you to better manage the pain you live with.

STEP 8: Exercise

Most people with chronic pain fear exercise. But unused muscles feel more pain than toned flexible ones. With your doctor, identify a modest exercise program that you can do safely. As you build strength, your pain can decrease. You'll feel better about yourself, too.

STEP 9: See the Total Picture

As you learn to set priorities, reach goals, assert your basic rights, deal with your feelings, relax, and regain control of your body, you will see that pain does not need to be the center of your life. You can choose to focus on your abilities, not your disabilities. You will grow stronger in your belief that you can live a normal life in spite of chronic pain.

STEP 10: Reach Out

It is estimated that one person in three suffers with some form of chronic pain. Once you have begun to find ways to manage your chronic pain problem, reach out and share what you know. Living with chronic pain is an ongoing learning experience. We all support and learn from each other.