

# From Patient to Person: First Steps

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# Introduction

# ACPA Mission

- To facilitate peer support and education for individuals with chronic pain and their families so that these individuals may live more fully in spite of their pain.
- To raise awareness about issues of living with chronic pain among the health care community, policy makers, and the public at large.



# Chapter One



# Learning to Live With it

"Learn to live with it." The phrase becomes all too familiar to anyone faced with chronic pain. If ever anything was "easier said than done" this is it. Yet what choice do we really have?

In recent years, medicine has made advances in many specialized fields.

Unfortunately for the person with chronic pain, most pain medication cause side effects and may cause tolerance and physical dependence. No single procedure has been developed to relieve chronic pain. Even achievement of nights of good, restful sleep remains a problem for those who have unrelenting pain.

Although there is no simple, one-step answer to relieving chronic pain, that does not mean that those in the "learn to live with it" situation must face a lifetime of hopeless nights and helpless days. It is possible to learn to live with it. This answer is not easy, but for most people it is possible to live a moderately active life with chronic pain.

To learn to live with chronic pain we must become involved in our own recovery. We must take responsibility for it. Up to this point medicine has not been effective in the total relief of our pain problem. If it had, no one would be reading this. While our personal physician is the only one who can provide us with proper medical treatment, there is indeed something that we can do about our present situation. This manual tells us how to begin to help ourselves achieve a more active and even less painful lifestyle. There is no easy cure for chronic pain problems, but it is possible to regain control of daily life by directing our energies and thoughts away from pain as we turn our attention to positive and constructive channels.

This manual is prepared by the **American Chronic Pain Association** (ACPA), a nonprofit, self-help organization. Local ACPA chapters consist of people with chronic pain who help each other to return to a near-normal level of functioning despite continuing pain. The benefits and services to the self-help group member are many. Nonfunctioning chronic pain persons learn methods of coping with pain and are supported in their efforts. This manual has been produced to provide hands-on information to ACPA members as well as to those persons who do not have an ACPA group available to them. It is designed to give an overview of the problem of chronic pain and was written by a person who has had firsthand experience with it.



The ACPA provides its members the opportunity to learn coping skills designed to aid them in dealing with pain in a more positive and constructive manner. These skills include:

**SETTING PRIORITIES Setting Priorities**– What is the most important issue in your life right now? If you have chronic pain you must ask yourself this question continually. It is important to recognize all the issues you are dealing with and then begin to prioritize them according to their meaning to you. Having a starting place is of the utmost importance.

**Goal Setting Goal Setting**– Does time ever become a blur for you? Have you abandoned or denied some of your responsibilities? Do you ever look at life in blocks of time, defined by television shows? Do you feel that life no longer has any meaning and one day melts into the next?

One of the first issues discussed with new members is that of setting realistic goals. Just needing a reason to get out of bed in the morning is reason enough to have a goal in life. Members start out very slowly, making sure that they don't set themselves up for failure in whatever it is they attempt to do.

Examples of initial goals set by ACPA members are: making one phone call a week, preparing dinner one night without outside help, reading, going shopping for a short time, or resuming an old hobby. These goals might sound insignificant, but to a person with pain who has spent months or years sitting in a recliner, it is a tremendous achievement to get out of the house. After several months many people find that they have greater personal responsibility and have a purpose in their lives. This achievement builds self-confidence.

**Basic Rights Basic Rights**– Taking responsibility for our own recovery is a major step in dealing with pain. During the time we have pain we learn that sick people don't have to maintain their responsibilities. Family and friends are quick to accept our limited ability because of the illness we have. In time, both people with pain and their families accept the idea that the person with pain is exempt from life. Having an awareness of our basic rights teaches personal responsibility, making us responsible for our actions. There is no longer a need to refer to our pain in order to explain the behavior we exhibit. We become responsible for our behavior instead of allowing our pain to speak for us.

**Assertiveness Assertiveness**– Once we have an understanding of our

basic rights, we are ready to begin learning how to put them to practical use. Through assertiveness training we can gain a better understanding of how to come across tactfully while still making our own needs, wants, and desires known.

Managing Emotions- **Managing Emotions**— Self-doubt is a part of chronic pain. Many people with pain feel that their pain may be only imaginary since the doctors, whom they expect to work miracles, cannot make their pain go away. People with pain often feel that they are losing touch with reality. We need to learn to understand exactly what we are feeling and how it affects us—both physically and emotionally. This is not to say that the pain is not real, but rather, to stress the need to understand the connection between the physical self and the emotional self.

Relaxation **Relaxation**— Stress plays an important role in pain. The level of pain we have can be affected by the amount of stress we experience. While most pain is of a physical origin, many areas of life play an important role in the overall well-being of a person with pain. We must learn to recognize signs of stress and tension and begin to develop ways to reduce muscle tension.

Exercising

**Exercising** – The eighteen simple stretches in this manual are designed to increase muscle tone in weak and out of shape muscles. It is important to approach exercise realistically and **only with your doctor's approval.**



# Chapter 2

## How Chronic Pain Affects Our Life

If we allow it to, pain can completely control our lives. If we still have pain after exploring every medical option available, many of us feel like giving up. The bottom line may be that there is nothing anyone can do to completely eliminate all our pain. Some of us have spent years searching for relief. We may have tried a wide variety of therapies, medications, perhaps even operations, without success. By the time the pain becomes a chronic problem, most of the personal support we had at the onset of our pain is gone. Any friends we might have had may have slowly faded into the shadows. Our family may have been our sole support system, but even family members become confused and discouraged and often give up. What is worse, we may even doubt the reality of our pain. It is a confusing time for everyone.

***Chronic pain** persists a month or more beyond the usual course of acute disease or a reasonable time for the injury to heal or that is associated with a chronic pathological process that causes continuous pain or the pain recurs at intervals of months or years. J.J. Bonica.*

***Acute pain** is a constellation of unpleasant sensory, perceptual, and emotional experiences associated with autonomic, psychological, emotional, and behavioral responses. J.J. Bonica,*

It is easy to get caught up in the vicious cycle of desperately trying to find relief. In the end, some of us may become controlled by our pain. The pain problem may have started as acute pain. We assumed the pain would run its course and then go away. Instead we found that as each day passed, time became a blur. Time was marked by pills, doctor appointments, and television shows. Once the pain problem is truly chronic, many of us have completely withdrawn from other human beings. Soon we can't find the support and understanding we so desperately need.

Depression is a natural part of chronic pain. Why get out of bed in the morning if it means another long painful day? The total isolation experienced with chronic pain is unbearable, for only another who has chronic pain can truly understand. If we allow it, pain can destroy our lives; but the majority of us don't know how to fight back.



If we submit to the pain and let it control our lives, there is no way on earth that we can overcome the hold pain has on every moment of our lives. But with the right direction and the proper support system, life can be different. We must ask ourselves, "Do I really want to help myself? Am I willing to allow the all-consuming pain to rule the rest of my life?"

Until recently we did not have a choice; pain was our existence. Now, if we really believe in ourselves, we can use the new techniques in medicine and the new approaches to pain management explained in this manual to become a person and leave the role of patient behind. It is important that we understand that our pain may not completely disappear but that it is possible to live successfully with a degree of pain.

To achieve this goal, we must use our own ability to become active and aware of what has gone on in our lives since the pain took over. We do not mean to imply that the pain is not real. Doubt of the pain is part of the chronic pain syndrome. Without effective treatment or diagnosis, we may question the true existence of our pain. The pain is real, don't ever doubt that.

Begin to focus on what can be done about the situation at this moment, not why it has happened. There's a point at which we have to accept that medicine has done all it can. Obtain several opinions, perhaps as many as ten if need be. However, if there is no means to completely eliminate the pain, we must accept the fact that we have chronic pain. We must then use our own resources to become actively involved in learning to live with pain rather than merely exist from day to day. It is possible to live with pain. We need to learn how to do that.



# Chapter 3

## Ten Concepts: Moving from Patient to Person

The following steps are designed to help people with chronic pain make the transition from patient to person. The steps are the basic philosophy of the American Chronic Pain Association. Interaction with peers and ACPA group members can help us to regain control of our lives and at the same time improve the quality of daily living. Becoming involved in an ACPA group will provide the opportunity to learn the coping skills necessary to begin to regain some control over your life. At ACPA meetings you will quickly realize that you are not alone. Going from a patient to a person is not an easy matter. It will take a great deal of effort to succeed. But what do you have to lose but the pain? It is possible to reduce your sense of suffering. Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness can be replaced with hope and determination. You may be able to plan for tomorrow instead of only existing today.

### **First: Acceptance of the Pain**

At first we look to the medical community to take away our pain. The causes of chronic pain are often not understood. Medical science is making quantum leaps in health care, but many things are still unknown. The reason for your pain may be one of them. You need to ask your doctor about your pain and try to understand as much as possible about what is happening to your body and what you can expect long term.

Fear of the pain must be removed before you begin to accept it and start making progress. The ACPA does not replace proper medical treatment. We can help you work along with your medical program in "learning to live with it."

### **Second: Getting Involved**

Taking the next step in the road to recovery—getting actively involved—means working with health care providers to enhance the treatments they are providing. No longer will you be a passive partner in treating the pain. It is now time to understand what responsibilities you, the person with pain, have. Discuss with your doctor and other health care providers what they can provide and what they expect from



you. The ACPA can help by providing peer support and teaching coping skills. However, the best intervention will not be effective unless you are willing to be an active participant.

The pain that you experience may not go away completely, but it is possible to lead a productive life in spite of the pain. It has been proven that pain management coping skills can, in many cases, decrease pain. There are no miracle cures for chronic pain, but there are, indeed, ways to cope with the problem.

### **Third: Priorities**

What is the most important thing to you today? You need to ask yourself this question each day. Keep a list of things that are important in your life. This list should include personal problems, things that create happiness, and issues that you must address. Setting priorities helps you to look past the black and white of everyday living and focus on the wide range of issues that bring the color into each one of our lives.

Setting priorities helps you focus on what you believe to be important. Your priorities then become your starting point to move back into the mainstream of an active life.

### **Fourth: Realistic Goals**

By recognizing our limitations and knowing our priorities, we can begin to set specific goals for ourselves. In the past, our pain may have stopped us from performing many of our usual activities. We may have shut ourselves off from the outside world. As each day begins, we can't find a good reason to get out of bed. Having a goal provides us with a reason. Goals don't have to be focused on work but rather on activities that we enjoy. Setting aside relaxation time can be a realistic goal. Accomplishing one of our goals is a powerful force in generating a positive attitude and helping each of us to live with pain.

Keep in mind that goals should be within reach. We should have the ability to make them happen. If we set our goals too high we may be setting ourselves up for failure, which would be an emotional blow to an already bruised ego. We must learn to walk again before we can run. One step at a time we can begin to feel as if we are in control of our lives again.

1. The right to act in a way that promotes your dignity and self respect.
1. The right to be treated with respect.
2. The right to make mistakes.
3. The right to do less than you are humanly capable of doing.
4. The right to change your mind.
5. The right to ask for what you want.



6. The right to take time to slow down and think before you respond.
7. The right to feel that you don't have to explain everything you do and think.
8. The right to say "no" and not feel guilty.
9. The right to ask for information.
10. The right to feel good about yourself.
11. The right to ask for help or assistance.
12. The right to disagree.
13. The right to ask "why?"
14. The right to be listened to and taken seriously when expressing your feelings.

## **Fifth: Your Basic Rights**

No matter who we are, what we look like, or what we do, we have certain basic rights. These rights establish the fundamental principles of our actions and reactions. It is important that each of us study these rights, understand them, and use them in our daily life. These rights will give us freedom to explore vast opportunities that we may not have believed possible before. Your rights will allow you to be you without feeling guilty. (*See chapter ten for more detail about basic rights.*)

## **Sixth: Recognizing Emotions**

Your body and mind are one. Many people feel that their pain is only in their bodies. Others are afraid that it is all in their heads. Both are half right. Pain affects both the mind and body. It is impossible to separate physical sensations from emotional ones. Certain cycles occur during emotional highs and lows. When we are happy we laugh, and the entire body seems to experience this happiness. When we are sad our body feels weighted down and heavy. The emotional self directly affects our physical well being. Anxiety causes us to tense up all over. Every muscle in our body will contract, and sore muscles will ache even more. What we experience in everyday life has a bearing on our degree of pain. We must begin to recognize emotions, understand them, and deal with them. Any unresolved emotion can affect our pain. With the help and support of the ACPA group members, you can sort through some issues that you may have been afraid of before.

## **Seventh: Relaxation**

Muscles which are already sore and painful will become even more sore and painful when they are stressed. When we become irritated our pain level automatically increases. It is possible to decrease pain levels by learning how to relax, even during times of stress. In fact, it is possible for you to tell your body how it is you want it to feel. The first step, of course, is to recognize the signs of stress. Become more in tune with your body and what it is telling you.

We cannot eliminate all stress from our lives, so we must learn how to control



the effects of a stressful situation. As pain levels increase we can do several things to help keep pain at a manageable level. By practicing the relaxation techniques available on ACPA relaxation tapes and CDs, biofeedback training and other video and audio tapes, it is possible to learn these skills so that you can tell your body how you want it to feel. Learning relaxation techniques takes practice. When they are mastered it is highly probable that pain levels can be decreased while a sense of control over your body is achieved.

## **Eighth: Exercise**

Inactivity is common when we are not feeling well. Because unused muscles quickly become limp and weak, they experience more pain than healthy muscles. It is important for us to keep our muscles active. Building strong muscles really can help reduce the level of pain we experience. It is common for individuals with chronic pain to become deconditioned by avoiding actions or exercises that may temporarily increase pain. It is to our benefit to begin an exercise program that will allow us to regain control over our bodies. By following a regular program of mild stretching exercises (**which your doctor must approve**), you may notice that pain levels decrease. Good muscle tone can decrease the amount of pain we feel.

## **Ninth: Total Outlook**

Reviewing all of the previous concepts, you can see exactly how your life may have improved with each step. If you are involved in an ACPA group, you will be encouraged by members who accomplish personal goals. The ACPA group becomes a team and each step forward by any member is a step for the entire team. Share your experience with the group, especially the new members. If you are not in an ACPA group, find out how you can help establish one in your community.

## **Tenth: Outreach**

It is estimated that one in every three persons experience some form of chronic pain. Many of these people still manage to function in spite of the pain. Many others will slowly withdraw into their own world. This is a world with which you are familiar. Share what you have learned with others. Contact a new member and help him or her through the steps you have just accomplished. Learning to live with pain is an ongoing experience, and while you are helping another, you will be reinforcing yourself.



Establish contact with a local pain unit and arrange a convenient time for a visit. Your visit can be a tremendous help to those who are just starting on their long road to recovery. Individuals who are scheduled to graduate from a pain management program may be apprehensive of the world outside pain programs that knows nothing about chronic pain or the skills they have learned. Positive reinforcement is important if wellness is to be maintained. Outreach can provide both you and others with that extra edge it takes to live with chronic pain.



# Knowing Yourself



# Chapter 4

## Do You Know Who You Are?

If each of us looks back in time, we can remember the carefree days of our childhood. It was a time filled with wonder and amazement. Dreams were reality waiting to happen. The world was filled with all sorts of wonder and anything seemed possible. As we reach our adult years, life becomes increasingly difficult; performance must be 100 percent, attitudes must be similar to those of fellow workers, and personal achievement too often measures our true worth.

While our childhood years are gone, much of what we experienced in that time affects our adult judgments and personality. Those of us who were expected to be above average children now insist that we remain above average. Those of us who were not expected to amount to anything still believe we have less value than most. Those of us who were taught to remain in control of emotions at all times still strive to appear very much in control of our emotions. It is this kind of input, ingrained in us as children, which now controls our emotions. But that does not make it right!

*The way that we are treated as small children is the way we treat ourselves the rest of our life.*

*Alice Miller  
For Your Own Sake*

To look at an individual with chronic pain problems is, many times, to see an individual who is what is referred to as a "people pleaser," someone who puts his own needs last. As time goes by, it is difficult for such people to know exactly who they are. Unfortunately for them, they never thought self actualization was important.

Yet, when we are faced with a crisis in our lives, we must look to our inner strength to begin to deal with that crisis. If, when we look inside, all we can find are shadows of all the other people in our lives, our ability to cope is deceased. To learn to live with chronic pain, a total commitment to ourselves is necessary. For perhaps the first time, we must focus on our



own needs, feelings, wants, desires, and abilities. It takes a total commitment and an honest and sincere desire to work effectively toward a level at which we can function, even with pain.

The ACPA believes each person who has chronic pain has the right to have time and support, in order that he or she can work toward an appropriate solution. Each person is different; therefore, each person's approach will entail varied and unique issues. The most important thing to keep in mind is that it is possible to learn to live with pain and be content and happy at the same time.

As I look back on my own life, I always remember saying that I wanted to be better at one thing than anyone else. I wanted to shine in one particular area. I worked all my life trying to reach this goal, only to realize that I could not. However, I had the answer all the time. I was looking to outside talents and achievements to fulfill my goal. I neglected to look to myself for the answer. There was one thing I could do better than anyone else—be myself. No one else could be me. And as I grew in my understanding of myself and my needs, I realized that being me was enough.

Take a moment to compile a list of things that you find pleasing about yourself. This list can only benefit you, so be honest.



Things I like about me:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Now, write down on another piece of paper what it is you don't like about yourself.

Things I don't like about me:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Examine the list closely and decide how you feel about what you have written.

Now answer the following questions:

1. Is there anything in either column you feel you could change to improve your feelings about yourself? List them here:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

2. Taking each thing on your list above, explain how you would make



changes and how you would benefit.



What you feel on the inside is what counts. The outside covering you so often see in the mirror is not the total of who you are but only the packaging. There are many areas about yourself that you have yet to explore. Don't be afraid to find out as much as you can about yourself. You should never stop growing in your personal understanding of yourself.

Try this next exercise. Stand in front of a mirror for one minute looking at yourself. Now walk away and think about what you felt as you stood before the mirror. Take a few minutes to write your impression of what you saw. Give yourself time to think about it. Try to remember as many details and words as you can. If you have trouble with this, you might want to repeat the exercise, this time talking into a tape recorder, to ensure that you accurately document your feelings.

Write words, phrases or a paragraph about what you saw and felt while standing in front of the mirror.



Many of us can only think of all the things about ourselves that we wish to change or are not happy about. We see that the image in the mirror is not exactly what we believe acceptable. We are either too fat, too thin, our hair is the wrong color or we do not have enough hair, our nose is the wrong shape, etc. The point is that what you are really seeing in the mirror are your feelings reflecting back to you. The image you see is only an outside covering for the real you. What makes you are your feelings, thoughts, ideas, confusions, and fears, along with what you believe, say, and do. Only when you accept yourself completely will you be able to accept the image in your mirror.

During the next week, keep a journal of how you are progressing in self-appreciation. Below is space for a week-long journal. At the end of each day, make an entry of what you did to help yourself toward self-acceptance. If you have a difficult time identifying the positive steps you took, explain why. Any insight you gain is helpful as you journey from patient to



person.



Sunday:

Monday



Tuesday

Wednesday



Thursday





Friday

Saturday



Other ACPA materials are designed to help you with self-acceptance. Call the ACPA National Office for more information. Remember, you need to be your own best friend . . . not your worst enemy.

# Chapter 5

## Setting Priorities

*Priority 1. Precedence, especially established by order of importance or urgency. 2.a. An established right to precedence, b. An authoritative rating that established such precedence.*

Setting priorities gives us a starting point, not only for our monthly goals but to deal with the many issues that we face in life. It is important to identify important concerns we face each day.

We all have many areas in life demanding our attention. The thought of them can make us feel tired and defeated. We must identify each area of concern and establish an order of importance. The following exercise will help you see what it is you must face in the coming days.

Begin by writing each item you feel you'll have to deal with in the next few months, each on a separate piece of paper. Don't try, just yet, to put them



in any kind of order. Using small note cards works well. Take time to do this so that you do not overlook anything.

Once you feel you have listed all your priorities, try to decide which item is the most important—your number one priority. To help you identify what is important, list the pros and cons of each item.

**Example:**

*Exercise daily*

Pros:

*build muscle tone*

*reduce pain level*

*is a positive thing*

*I do for me*

Cons:

*makes me hurt sometimes*

*too tired*

*no time to do it*

Allow yourself time to create your list, taking your situation into account. Give thought to what you would gain if you concentrated on any given item. Is it worth your efforts to pursue a particular item, or would it be more advantageous for you to deal with another one first? This is going to take considerable thought on your part, but it will help you develop your own awareness about your life and your personal needs.

Perhaps for the first time in your life, you are being asked to concentrate on your own wants and needs. This may make you feel selfish or a little self-centered. What this exercise does is to help you realize that you have needs just like everyone else and that you and your needs are just as important as those of anyone else. The ACPA believes that if you manage to gain a degree of control over your own life, those around you will also benefit. They will notice the change in attitude from a helpless "I cannot do anything" person to an "I'll try my best" person.

Once you have established which item is your "number one" priority, begin to map out a strategy, a way to approach the item. Working through this exercise can help you gain a clear understanding of your needs, understand what is involved in fulfilling them, and discover areas where you might be willing to risk unknown factors to accomplish your goals.

Remember, you've identified priorities to be helpful to yourself. Your



"number one" priority may change from time to time as your needs change. You are allowed to change your mind. This is one of your basic rights.

An easy way to keep track of priorities and have the ability to change their importance is to place each item on a separate note card. As things begin to change in your life, so do your priorities. Lay your cards down on a table and pick them up in the order of importance at the moment. Then if circumstances change, you can easily adjust your priorities. This will enable you to remain focused on your needs.

## Priorities give us a starting point.

In this next section we are going to look at how to develop a plan of action to achieve a priority. Keep in mind that each person using this manual is at a different level of functioning. Some are able to go out of the house each day to work. Others are not able to work but can be useful to some degree in the home. And there are some who spend most of their day in bed. Let's take a closer look at how these three different groups would list priorities. Three examples are given, one for each level of functioning.

Statement: I want to feel useful to myself and to my family.

### **Example for those who have a very low activity level:**

#### **Good Points:**

1. I am a good housekeeper.
2. I care about others.
3. I am good with my hands.
4. I want to feel better, be more active.

#### **Bad Points:**

1. I don't do much housekeeping.
2. I don't care enough about me.
3. I have no energy.
4. My pain controls my life.

### **How to work toward progress:**

The first statement consists of two issues: being useful to yourself and being useful to your family. First let's narrow this down to feeling useful to yourself. Remember, you have to take one step at a time.

### **Steps you might take to make yourself more useful to yourself:**

1. Set a definite time to wake up each morning. Do not sleep past the time



set.

I will get up at \_\_\_\_\_ a.m each morning

2. Once you are out of bed, give yourself half an hour to have your morning breakfast before getting dressed.
3. Get dressed. Staying in your night clothes reinforces your image of being sick. Dressing is a very important step. If you pass a mirror during your daily routine and see yourself looking less than presentable, this unacceptable image automatically instills a negative attitude in you.
4. Try to shorten or eliminate naps during the day. This will help you feel more productive and also improve your sleep at night.
5. For the first week, select a time during the day when you're at your best and plan a project for that time. This can be a simple project such as making the evening meal or walking. Most likely there's something that you enjoy which you haven't done in a long time. Now is the time to attempt an activity that will please you and make you feel good about yourself.

My best time of the day is: \_\_\_\_\_

During that time I will: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Use your goal sheet (found on page 49 of this manual ) to track your progress for the first month. Were you realistic about your goals, or did you try to run before you could walk?

7. Use what you have learned from this exercise to determine what you can do in the coming months. Remember anyone who tries never fails!



Write a brief statement below about what you have learned from this exercise.

Steps you might take to make yourself more useful to your family:

1. Become a part of the family. Take time during each day to be with other family members. Remain connected with what is going on in the family.



2. Plan a weekly project with your family. This does not have to be a difficult project but should be one in which you can be involved.
  
3. Take part in doing the daily chores. Recognize your physical limitations and then offer to do what you can realistically do to help the family.
  
4. Allow your family to become involved in your recovery. Talk openly with them about how you feel, not physically but emotionally. Let them know that you are trying to help yourself and that it is important to you to have their support.

**Statement:** I would like to be able to contribute more to the family, and feel that I have a positive effect on the family instead of a negative one.

Example of good and bad points of someone who does not go out of the house to work but is fairly active in the home:

Good Points:

Bad Points:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. I get out of bed each day and get dressed.<br>home.                                 | 1. I am not able to work<br>outside the    |
| 2. I help with small chores<br>contribute to<br>around the house.<br>family income.    | 2. I cannot<br>the                         |
| 3. I try to be useful, and do<br>not allow my pain to be the<br>center of family life. | 3. I am a financial drain<br>on my family. |

How to work toward progress:

1. First ask yourself what would make you feel more productive. Write below.



2. How can you accomplish this goal and still stay within your limitations?

3. Create a schedule that you can follow each day. Perhaps it is important for you to contribute to the family income. For example, suppose you are a teacher. While it is not possible for you to teach all day, it might be possible for you to tutor a child in your home. A daily planner which may help in planning your day is shown on the following page. Just write down what you would like to accomplish during the day. At the end of the day look over your list to see how well you did. Remember to keep in mind your abilities and limitations.

***Date:***

***A.M.***

***8:00***

***9:00***

***10:00***



11:00  
P.M.  
12:00  
1:00  
2:00  
3:00  
4:00  
5:00  
6:00  
7:00  
8:00  
9:00  
10:00  
11:00

*If Fate does not adjust itself  
to you, adjust yourself to Fate.  
\* Persian proverb \**

<i>To Do:</i>	<i>Needs:</i>

4. As your ability and confidence increase, you may be able to look at a more active life style, even return to work part time. List below several ideas that might interest you.



Statement: I want to be able to enjoy the time I spend away from work.

Example of a person who works full time but has no outside activities and does not socialize.

Good Points:

Bad Points:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. I am able to work full time.            | 1. My life is filled with nothing but work and pain.                     |
| 2. I contribute financially to my family.  | 2. I do not contribute emotionally to my family.                         |
| 3. My pain is less when I am busy working. | 3. I feel as though I am a robot.  |
| 4. I am doing the best I can.              | 4. No one understands how I can work and not take part in family events. |

How to work toward progress:

1. Ask yourself what would make you happy. What would you like to do if only you had more energy? Keep in mind that this is only a list so write down as much as you can.



2. Set at least one hour aside each day to pursue an activity that can help you increase your endurance. It should be something that you enjoy. This can be something very simple, such as walking through a mall for a short time or spending time on a craft or activity that you enjoy, such as needlework, woodworking, baking, tennis, bike riding, or going to the movies. List below several things that you have done.

- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

9. After a week, re-evaluate what you have done and how you feel about it. Were you able to take the time to do something that you enjoyed? If so, what did you do? If you had a difficult time taking time for yourself please explain.

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10. List your feelings created during the week using the feeling words on pages 70-71 of this manual.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

11. What steps could you take to change your daily routine to provide you more time to enjoy with your family?

1. Ask for help. One of your basic rights is the right to ask for help. Family members might be able to give you encouragement and be willing to work on spending quality time with you. We all need to take time to play! Write a brief statement of what you needed help with.



2. Work out a schedule for the next year focused on your at-home hours and what you plan to do. Don't be afraid to use your imagination. You might even work toward taking a vacation with your family or a close friend.

Remember, you are only as disabled as you allow yourself to be. There is always something you can do within your limitations to feel more useful and productive. Use the ACPA Coping Skills Calender to help plan your year.

This space below is provided for you to define your own priorities. First you must recognize what you see as your good and bad points.

Statement:

**Good Points:**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

**Bad Points**

1.

2.

3.

4.



5.

How I will work toward progress:

1.

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2.

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3.

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4.

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5.

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### MY PRIORITIES

Use this page to make a list of your priorities. Remember, they will change in importance as each day passes.





# Chapter 6

## Goals

### The Importance Of Personal Goals

Chronic pain can control your life, an unfortunate fact when pain is constant or nearly constant. Life seems to lose all meaning as energy levels decrease and motivation vanishes. There is virtually no reason to get out of bed in the morning if all you have to look forward to is pain. It is far too easy to remain in bed anticipating a lower pain level.

Setting goals is one way of preparing yourself mentally and emotionally to act on your commitment to regain control of your life. Your desire for a better lifestyle will provide the motivation you need. Setting personal goals expresses confidence in your ability to meet your own needs in fulfilling that commitment. First, you need to understand exactly what your needs are. Throughout the day be aware of what you're feeling and what needs you have. Every hour try to write a few sentences about your feelings, what needs you have, what activities you could and couldn't do, and how much energy you had. For this exercise, make note of what your pain level is after each activity. Also make note of how you felt after resting.



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Today My goal is: \_\_\_\_\_

Record each hour what you have done, how it made you feel and the amount of energy it took.

Time	2:00	Activity	How it made you feel
7:00am			
8:00	3:00		
9:00	4:00		
10:00	5:00		
11:00	6:00		
Noon	7:00		
1:00	8:00		
	9:00		

Level  
of  
energy  
1 none ~  
10 most

Review your list at the end of the day. What effect did the events of the day have on you? Write a few brief statements below.

Did you attempt too many activities or did you feel you could do more?



Based on what you learned today, what are your plans for tomorrow?

*A goal should be a response to your present needs as you perceive them.*

Once you have made a personal commitment to recognize and meet your needs, you can focus on working toward regaining control. This sense of control, in turn, helps to build a positive self-image. Many people with chronic pain see themselves as insignificant. Their inability to deal effectively with the pain only reinforces their low self-image. Remember, the only true failure is when no attempt is made. As your ability to establish and meet your personal goals improves, you begin to feel more in charge of your life.

As personal goals are met, the feeling of control increases. Inactivity uses very little energy, one reason why sleep is so difficult for many people with chronic pain. The need to focus your energy can be met through working on personal goals. Your goals also force you to look again at your priorities, to reconsider what really counts.

A goal should be a response to your present needs as you perceive them. Whether it is centered around devoting an hour a day to reading or making a commitment to begin an exercise program, your goal should reflect what is important to you.



A goal gives you the ability to become involved in life again, no matter how small a goal you start with. It is a personal declaration on which you can build as each day passes. The sense of accomplishment you get from setting a goal will encourage you to plan for tomorrow rather than existing in today. Certain factors must be reviewed in determining personal goals. Some of these might be difficult to understand and accept. Remember, to begin to achieve any amount of control over pain, you must have a basic understanding of your thoughts, feelings, and actions.

## Determining Your Goals: General Guidelines

Setting realistic goals is very important in learning how to live with pain. A goal gives you a starting place as well as a focus for your energy and attention. While working to achieve a goal, you are not quite as aware of the pain.

### The benefits of setting goals:

If we are faced with a chronic pain problem, we find that in time our personal responsibilities dwindle away. We are viewed by others as a sickly person with little or no energy. Plans are made without including us. At home very few, if any, demands are made of us. We become detached from most outside activities. Time is measured by television shows and medication schedules. We've stepped into the world of an unperson. No one expects anything from us. And after a while we agree to sit idly by as life goes on. Our pain level increases, and our self-esteem is almost nonexistent. Having personal goals can change the pattern of inactivity we've unknowingly slipped into.

As we set personal goals, we prepare ourselves mentally and emotionally to act on our commitment to regain our health. Sometimes people with chronic pain view their pain as a personal failure. Since our attempts to alleviate the problem did not succeed, we may blame ourselves for not getting better. This is unrealistic; instead, we need to begin to work toward a solution. Our goals can aid us by shaping a positive frame of mind, working toward progress rather than giving up.

Starting out slowly is being realistic about the situation. The first step may be the most difficult. Fear of a new experience is natural. The key is to make sure we are being realistic about our goals. We aren't going to rebuild our lives today. However, by taking one step at a time we can make progress



in reclaiming our lives. Below are a few issues we must consider before beginning to establish personal goals.

As you begin to work on achieving your goal, your confidence in your ability will increase. You will realize that you have talents and resources. Your self-image will improve as you regain control of your life. Even if progress is slow, any step in becoming a person again is positive. As you begin to work on your chosen goal you have a focus for both your energy and your attention. Your pain may no longer be the center of your life.

**Review the "benefits" of illness.** Honestly, what are the pluses? This is not to say that you remain sick so that you can reap the benefits, but rather to help you see that there may be some benefits. If you find that because of the pain you now spend more time with your family unit or close friends and enjoy it, this might be a place to set your first goal. Allow yourself just so much time each day to be with family members or friends. Be with your family/friend because you choose to, not because you have no other choice.

Perhaps you find that because of the pain, you have more time to yourself. You find time to read the books you have put off for so long. Just having daytime peace and quiet during your illness has proven to be a bit of a blessing. Allow yourself just so much time each day to read, write, or just to be by yourself. Again, do this because you choose to, not because your pain allows nothing else.

What benefits might you have gained from your pain?

Ask "survival" questions. "What do I want to do today that is worth



getting out of bed for?" or "What makes me want to live?" Sometimes it takes a great deal of thought to determine this part of your needs. Often these questions may have run through your mind but you may have ignored them. To really deal with your pain, to regain some control in your life, you must gain an understanding of exactly what would make you happy. Again, do not allow the pain to be the first thought in your mind. When asking yourself these questions, forget for just a moment that you have the pain. Give yourself the opportunity to believe in your ability.

Write a brief statement about what you believe to be your basic needs.

What would motivate you to get out bed today?



Ask "growing-up" questions. "What do I want to be when I grow up?" Force yourself to think of what you wanted out of life in the past. It is never too late to set new goals for yourself and make them happen if you want them badly enough. Just set satisfying goals that you can reach.

What do I want to be when I grow up? Answer this question to the best of your ability.



## Suggestions for goal setting:

Include goals that address your purpose in life: personal growth, your relationships with others, your career, and your financial targets.

Set some goals that are focused on pure recreation (but at least half of them should cost very little money, depending on how much you have.)

Goals should be focused in part on physical exercise. Perhaps a walk through a mall or nearby park with family or a friend would give you with both pleasant company and a way of exercising.

Make goals concrete and specific. Your goals need to be tangible so it is clear when they have been met. For example, when setting a goal around exercise, state exactly how much you want to accomplish in the first month. Rather than saying, "I want to start exercising," say, "I would like to be able to do ten leg lifts by the end of the month." This allows you to measure your progress and realize when you have reached your goal.

Make sure your goals are realistic. The purpose of goals is to build self-confidence as well as provide you with a focus for your energy. If you are unrealistic in setting a goal, it will be difficult for you to achieve results and you'll have gained nothing. You can begin slowly and build toward your goal as the months go by. Take into account your personal limitations when you set your goals.

Make sure your goals are within your power to accomplish. To state that you want to become a grandparent is inappropriate because it is completely out of your power. It involves the actions of two other people,



actions over which you have no control.

Use what you have learned from your past. Think back on your past. Are there mistakes you made that could now guide you? Hindsight is a wonderful thing. You can use your life experience to build future goals. Also, think back on things that gave you pleasure. Talk to old friends to get an idea of what you used to do and how much you enjoyed it. Live for the best of your tomorrows instead of in the mistakes and sorrows of yesterday.

If this exercise is difficult for you, perhaps you might want to take a moment and answer the questions below. They are designed to help you determine what it is you want, how to get it, and whom it will involve. There are, of course, many skills necessary to attain each goal you set, and this book will address some of those issues in coming chapters. For now, let's look at the questions and suggestions below:

1. What three goals would you like to accomplish in the next year?

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2. What do you presently see as obstacles to obtaining these three goals?

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3. Select just one of your goals and try to narrow it down to a manageable level for you. Make a list of all the factors involved in achieving this particular goal.



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4. After making your list, ask yourself whether you feel unable to achieve the goal. Does what you have to do to make progress scare you? Why?

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5. Does your goal depend on others? If so, have you spoken with them to make sure that they understand exactly what you are striving for and that you're counting on them for support?

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6. Find a starting point and begin immediately. Do not put your goal off another day! What is preventing you from working toward progress?

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7. Can you honestly say that you are willing to work toward your goal? Or, did you select this goal because you felt that it is what everyone would have expected of you?

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# Chapter 7

## EVALUATING YOUR GOALS Evaluating Your Goals

Now that you have determined your goal, it is time to begin working toward obtaining it. The evaluation sheets in this chapter are designed to give you some idea of where you are from week to week. They will also provide a record of your progress over the months. Personal growth is slow and can pass unnoticed; a written record will show you your progress.

If you are attending an ACPA chapter meeting, you might want to talk about your goal selection with other members, especially if you're having difficulty starting. They will help you to narrow down your goal so you'll be able to take one step at a time with confidence and pride.

Some goal suggestions:

1. Make a daily effort to begin an exercise program that will help build muscle tone. This does not mean you should attempt a vigorous exercise program; choose one that will help you get into a regular routine of exercise.



2. Get out of the house at least once a week. First consider how much time you would like to spend away from the house. Then decide what activity you could pursue in the time you allow. A trip to a nearby shopping mall might be suitable for a weekly outing and would provide you with both exercise and leisure time away from the house. Going to the local theater can be enjoyable while not requiring a great deal of energy. Eating out is perhaps something you have not considered as a goal. Visiting friends in the neighborhood can also be a goal when you have been housebound for a long period of time.
3. Develop a new interest. How often have you said to yourself, "I would love to do such and such if only I had the time"? Use your goal setting exercise to explore activities that interest you. You might consider taking classes in painting, writing short stories, learning to play a musical instrument, or even cooking special dishes. Your local community college may have programs that would allow you to complete your high school education or advance toward your college degree. Volunteering as a coach for a youth sports team or in some other community service might be a realistic goal that would meet your needs.
4. Deal with situations in your life. Because of your pain problem you may have to make a decision about your career. Begin to think of ways you can now provide income for yourself or your family. Spend time researching job opportunities available to you or look into the possibility of retraining for a different type of work.
5. Transferring some housekeeping responsibilities to your children might be a priority. Another might be having them accept responsibility for their school projects. Either is a worthwhile family goal you and your children can work on together.
6. Preparing the evening meal for your family can be difficult when your life is controlled by pain. Yet, in order to return to the role you filled before the pain, it is necessary that you begin to resume the responsibilities you once had. By cooking on a schedule that is realistic for you, say one meal a week, you can work your way back to what is normal for you. Other chores around the house can also be approached realistically if you choose. Working in the garden, redecorating a room, or even making necessary minor repairs can be accomplished through monthly goals.
7. To help you feel more a part of life, try to set a limited time each day for rest. If your goal is to practice relaxation exercises while you rest, your rest period will be of greater benefit to you.



Note: Each person using this manual has a different level of functioning. Make sure that your goal is matched to your current abilities and energy levels.

If determining your goal is difficult, take a moment to answer the questions below. They are designed to help you discover what you might want, how to get it, and whom it will involve.

## Goal Evaluation Work Sheet

You should begin thinking about the following are questions as you rate your goal from week to week. By following the guidelines in this chapter, you can begin with a small, realistic activity and move on to things you may have felt were out of reach.

**My Goal:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Selecting the Goal:

1. Did I chose a goal centered around my own wants and needs? Please explain.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Is this goal something I felt I had to do or wanted to do? Please explain.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



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3. Is this goal mine, one I chose for my own pleasure and enjoyment? Please tell what you expect to gain from your goal.

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4. Does my goal involve other people? If so, explain why you need someone else. Also think about how you could reword your goal so that it would not involve another person.

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5. If you must depend on someone else, have you received support from them in order to achieve your goal? Write a brief statement describing their role in helping you achieve your goal.

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6. Did I take my limitations into account when I selected my goal?  
Explain why or why not.

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Comments:

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First Week:

1. Did I work this week toward progress on my goal? Please explain.

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2. Did I receive any outside support or encouragement? If yes, please  
tell what kind of support.

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3. Did my goal seem to make me tense or anxious in any way? If yes,  
please explain.

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4. Or did I feel as if my limited abilities were restricting my efforts to  
make progress?

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On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being poor and 10 being excellent, I would rate my progress this week as:

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8  
9      10

Comments:

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During the week, what factors had an effect on your goal and your ability to achieve progress? While your goal may not have involved anyone else, certain events or feelings could have had some effect on your ability to make progress. Note such events below so that as you review these goal sheets through the coming months you will gain a better understanding of exactly what occurred to aid or hinder your progress. Jot down a few lines about the events as well as a line about your physical and emotional state. This will help you to correlate the emotions you feel with the amount of pain experienced. Try to do this at the same time each day. As the weeks go by you might be able to see a pattern forming which can give you some understanding about the emotional issues and their connection to your level of pain.

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Second Week:

1. Did I work this week toward progress on my goal? Please explain.

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2. Did I receive any outside support or encouragement? If yes, please tell what kind of support.

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3. Did my goal seem to make me tense or anxious in any way? If yes, please explain.

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4. Did I feel as if my abilities were restricting my efforts to make progress?

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On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being poor and 10 being excellent, I would rate my progress this week as:

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8  
9      10

Comments:

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During the week, what factors had an effect on your goal and your ability to make progress? While your goal may not have involved anyone else, certain events during the week could have had some effect on your ability to make progress. Note such events below so that, as you review these goal sheets through the coming months, you will gain a better understanding of exactly



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2. Did I receive any outside support or encouragement? If yes, please tell what kind of support.

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3. Did my goal seem to make me tense or anxious in any way? If yes, please explain.

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4. Did I feel as if my abilities were restricting my efforts to make progress?

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On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being poor and 10 being excellent, I would rate my progress this week as:

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8  
9      10

Comments:

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During the week, what factors had an effect on your goal and your ability to make progress? While your goal may not have involved anyone else, certain events during the week could have had some effect on your ability to make progress. Note such events below so that, as you review these goal sheets through the coming months, you will gain a better understanding of exactly what occurred to aid or hinder your progress. Just jot down a few lines about the events as well as a line about your physical state. This will help you to correlate the emotions you feel with the amount of pain experienced. Try to do this at the same time each day. As the weeks go by you might be able to see a pattern forming which can help you understand the emotional issues and their connection to your level of pain.

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Fourth Week:

1. Did I make progress this week to meet on my goal? Please explain.

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2. Did I receive any outside support or encouragement? If yes, please tell what kind of support.



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3. Did my goal seem to make me tense or anxious in any way? If yes, please explain.

---

4. Did I feel as if my abilities were restricting my efforts to make progress?

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On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being poor and 10 being excellent, I would rate my progress this week as:

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8  
9      10

Comments:



During the week, what factors had an effect on your goal and your ability to make progress? While your goal may not have involved anyone else, certain events during the week could have had some effect on your ability to make progress. Note such events below so that, as you review these goal sheets through the coming months, you will gain a better understanding of exactly what occurred to aid or hinder your progress. Just jot down a few lines about the events as well as a line about your physical state. This will help you to correlate the emotions you feel with the amount of pain experienced. Try to do this at the same time each day. As the weeks go by you might be able to see a pattern forming which can help you understand the emotional issues and their connection to your level of pain.

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After you've kept track of your personal goals for six months, take time to answer the following questions. These questions can help you see the progress you have made and help plan for the future.

## Overview of Your Goals

1. Where did you start? Did you start at the beginning or did you skip over small problems, thinking they were unimportant? Please explain.



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2. Do you think skipping over issues you felt unimportant hindered your progress? Why?

3. Did you get a sense of accomplishment with your first month's goal? Please list several "feeling" words to describe how you felt at the end of the first month. A list of words can be found on pages 70-71.



1 Do you feel you received enough outside support to make progress?  
[YES] [NO] If yes, please write below the names of those who gave you support.

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2. If not, how did that make you feel?

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3. Did you begin each month with the same sense of determination? If not, why not?

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4. Think about the amount of outside support you received and your attitude. How do you think both of these factors reaching your goals?



5. Which was the most difficult goal for you to achieve?

6. Was this a realistic goal for you? Did you stay within your limits?

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7. Did you believe at the time you set this goal that you could make progress? Did you think about a way to accomplish this?



8. If not, why did you pick this particular goal?

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9. Were you happy with achieving only part of the goal or at least making an attempt to work at it?

10. Should you try this particular goal again, if you are more specific about it? If not, why not?



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11. Were your goals centered around your own needs or someone else's? Please explain.

12. Did you keep in mind your basic rights as you worked toward progress? If so, which basic right was most helpful? Information on basic rights can be found in Chapter 10 of this book.



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13. Which goal did you find the easiest for you? Why?

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14. Looking back over past few months, can you see where in the future you might be able to concentrate more or less effort?



15. All in all, how did this exercise help you? How did it hinder you?





# Chapter 8

## MANAGING YOUR EMOTIONS **Managing Your Emotions**

What are feelings?

Feeling 1.a. The sensation involving perception by touch. B. A sensation perceived by touch. C. Any physical sensation. 2. Any affective state of consciousness, such as that resulting from emotions, sentiments, or desires: a feeling of excitement. 3. An awareness; impression 4. A. An emotional state or disposition; emotions. b. A tender emotion; love; fondness. <sup>1</sup>

Yes, we feel physical sensations. . . pain, heat, cold. These physical sensations are what you feel when you have a flare-up or pain levels increase. In this chapter we are going to take a closer look at emotional feelings.

Emotions are an internal response to external situations. For example, you watch a funny movie and you laugh, or someone shows a gesture of kindness toward you and you are filled with warmth toward that person. Perhaps you hit your hand with a hammer and you feel anger at your own mistake.

As children we were taught which behaviors were acceptable and which were not acceptable. Unfortunately, many of us were also told by our parents that certain feelings, like anger, were wrong. It was our parents' job to teach us right from wrong so that we could grow up to be responsible adults; however, some of us have learned the lessons too well. We still allow our emotions to be controlled by those childhood lessons. We were told that getting angry was unacceptable and showed a lack of self-control. Because of that type of training many of us struggle to suppress our anger. The only

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<sup>1</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, MA 1981.



problem with that is our feelings don't go away simply because we fail to recognize them.. We might be able to suppress the outward show of anger, but the feeling is still there. Eventually our anger will make its presence known in some way.

If you remember only one thing from this entire chapter it should be that **THERE ARE NO WRONG FEELINGS, ONLY INAPPROPRIATE ACTIONS.** There is no way you can tell yourself how to feel emotionally. For that matter, there is no way that anyone else can tell you how or what to feel. We might be able to control our physical actions, such as walking away from a situation that makes us feel angry enough to hit someone, but we can't help feeling the anger.

There is a danger in suppressing feelings. Suppressed feelings will remain locked inside for long periods of time. Most of the time we can fight the anger we feel, or the tears we feel forming in our eyes. Unfortunately, it is not easy to remain in control one hundred percent of the time; it takes a tremendous amount of energy to maintain total control. Eventually we're going to become exhausted, and that is when we are likely to react in a way that is not appropriate.

Our emotions are much like the valve on a pressure cooker. When the pressure becomes too great, the steam must escape so the pot does not explode. The safest way to let the steam out is little by little, as it builds up. Our personal feelings make each one of us special and unique. We all react differently to a similar situation. Ten people could be watching the same movie, and at the end of the movie each one could feel differently though they all watched the same movie. There is nothing wrong with allowing feelings to be a natural part of us and to play a role in our personal interpretation of the world. But when we ignore or suppress feelings, stress may increase. Increased stress can increase pain.

People usually don't have trouble expressing positive feelings; however, many of us hide or fail to recognize our negative feelings. For example, we all have been hurt by another's actions or words. It may be difficult for us to tell someone else that what they did or said was hurtful. Instead we might lock that hurt away in our minds, telling ourselves that it doesn't bother us. But, that hurt will not go away. We may believe that by not thinking or talking about the situation it doesn't exist, but that isn't so. Just like anger, hurt will surface without warning and make us act in a way that we wouldn't normally choose. It is very difficult to continually deny feelings of hurt. These suppressed feelings can eat away at us for an indefinite amount of time unless we deal with them.



Fear is also an emotion that we may try to conceal. This is especially true for men. Our fears can control our actions. Some of us feel that showing fear is telling the world that we're not in control. We see our fear as a weakness, which makes us feel even worse about ourselves. Everyone is afraid of something: elevators, heights, bugs, even crowded rooms can create uncontrolled fear. These fears will determine how we act to certain situations. Our need to have others see us in control forces many of us to avoid situations that would expose our fears.

Many people with pain are very sensitive when it comes to any suggestions that their pain is a result of depression. Think about it for a moment. Would anyone who had to endure long-term chronic pain be free of depression? It isn't important which came first; it is important to recognize that we are feeling depressed. Depression is not incurable. The ability to recognize and work through such feelings is very important to our total recovery.

To "get by" each day, many of us with chronic pain feel the need to remain in emotional control. Since this means fighting our natural responses, it uses a tremendous amount of our energy. Have you ever tried to "keep in" a laugh? Remember how much energy it took to hold that giggle inside, even if you didn't physically put your hand over your mouth. It takes just as much or more energy to hold in other emotions.

As mentioned earlier, many of us are "people pleasers." We have a need to be liked, to be in agreement with others, to shut off our feelings so as not to make waves. Negative emotions remain hidden. We believe that no one will like us if we yell, scream, or show fear in any way.

Not one person on the face of this earth experiences only positive feelings. There is nothing wrong with allowing feelings to be a natural part of you. To ignore feelings is to increase the likelihood of being stressed.

A partial list of "feeling" words has been compiled to help you become aware of and identify your feelings. Each of us responds to the "feeling" words with individual thoughts based on our personal experience. It is important to begin to recognize feelings. Be careful not to confuse an opinion or prediction with feelings. For example, "I feel that the winter will be long and cold this year," is an opinion. "I feel hurt that you don't like the dinner I made," is an expression of feelings.



## Words You Can Use to Describe Your Feelings

Abandoned	Crushed	Heavy
Able	Cheerful	Helpless
Afraid	Cuddly	Hopeful
Alarmed	Daring Dazzled	Hopeless
Alone	Deprived	Horny
Amazed	Desperate	Horrified
Ambivalent	Despised	Huffy
Angry	Depleted	Humble
Annoyed	Devious	Humiliated
Ambitious	Disappointed	Hurt
Appreciated	Disgusted	Hyper
Astounded	Down	Icy
Ashamed	Ecstatic	Ignored
Attracted	Effervescent	Impish
Avoided Babied	Embarrassed	Important
Bewildered	Empty	Inadequate
Blah	Energetic	Incensed
Blue	Euphoric	Indifferent
Blissful	Excited	Indignant
Boiling	Fearful	Inferior
Bold	Feminine	Insulted
Bored	Flake	Intense
Bossy	Flamboyant	Intimidated
Brave	Flustered	Irritated
Bright	Frazzled	Jaded
Burned out	Free	Jealous
Calm	Frightened	Jittery
Captivated	Frisky	Joyous
Cared for	Frustrated	Judged
Carefree	Fulfilled	Jumpy
Cautious	Funny	Kindly
Challenged	Giddy	Laid Back
Childish	Glad	Laughed at
Childlike	Gleeful	Left out
Close	Gloomy	Let down
Complete	Grateful	Light
Confident	Happy	Lively
Confused	Guilty	Lonely
Content	Gutsy	Longing
Cornered	Grief-stricken	Lost
Cozy	Harassed	Loved
Craving	Hazy	Lusty



Mad		
Martyred		
Masculine		
Maternal		
Mean		
Miffed		
Mischievous		
Needed		
Needy		
No Good		
Numb		
Ostracized		
Outraged		
Overloaded		
Overlooked		
Passive		
Peaceful		
Perplexed		
Pitiful		
Pleasant		
Pleased		
Po'd		
Poor Me		
Positive		
Powerful		
Powerless		
Protected		
Put down		
Put upon		
Quarrelsome	Quiet	Scared
Rambunctious		Ridiculous
Rebellious		
Refreshed		
Rejected		
Relieved		
Repaid		
Repulsed		
Reserved		
Respected		
Rewarded		
Ridiculed		
Secure		Sad
Serene		Satisfied
		Sexy
		Shy
		Spiritual
		Sprightly
		Spunky
		Startled
		Stingy
		Strong
		Sunny
		Suspect
		Tender
		Tense
		Tranquil
		Terrified

Timid

Touched  
Tough  
Trapped  
Turned Away  
Turned off  
Turned on  
Ugly  
Uncertain  
Undaunted  
Unhappy  
Unloved  
Unneeded  
Unnoticed  
Unrewarded  
Unseen  
Walked on  
Unwanted

Used  
Virile  
Wacky

Wanted  
Warm  
Washed out  
Watched  
Weak  
Weary  
Whole  
Weird  
Withdrawn  
Wounded  
Yearning  
Youthful  
Zealous  
Zesty

These are just a few “feeling” words. Add your own. Remember that you are the only one who really knows how you feel. No one else in the world can tell you how to feel or what to feel. Whatever you feel is okay; there are no wrong feelings. Only the way you choose to act on those feelings can be criticized. Allow yourself to experience whatever you feel at the time. You might just find that you feel better about yourself!

## Understanding Your Feelings

It is important for you to be aware of what you are feeling and what effect those feelings have on your pain level. No one should ignore or deny feelings. The exercise below is designed to help you work through a situation in which you didn't make your feelings known. It is intended to help you avoid similar situations.

First, think of a situation you experienced in which you came away with very strong feelings but did not express them. Enter it on the line provided below.

### **Situation:**

Now, go back to the beginning of the situation and explain exactly what happened. Put down in the space provided all the events leading to the situation.

Events leading up to the situation:

1. Where did the situation occur?
- 2.
- 3.

4. Who was present?

5. What time of the day was it?

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6. Was it an event you wanted to attend or a situation you felt forced to attend?

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7. When did you first start to notice that you were becoming uneasy about the situation?

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8. Was anything said or done which made you feel uncomfortable? If so, what?

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9. Did you feel you had any support system around you?

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10. How did you deal with the situation?

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11. What would you have done differently if you had had a second chance?

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12. Do you understand why you got so upset, perhaps became angry, hurt, embarrassed, frightened or confused?

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13. Did you learn anything about yourself from this situation? If so, what?

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Carefully look over what you've written. Can you understand what happened that made you so upset? Now is your opportunity to say what you feel "you should have said." It is important that you use words that best express your feelings then and now. Refer to your list of "feeling" words if you need help.

Remember, there are no wrong feelings, only wrong actions.

Some of us fear that others will think less of us if we experience emotions. Since no one can read our minds, we can feel whatever we want. Only our actions allow others to judge us.

As you review a situation, try to develop a clear understanding of what occurred which created negative emotions. That understanding is important and will help us avoid similar situations in the future.

When we try to stay too much in control of our emotions, we have more pain because of the stress we've placed on ourselves.

# Chapter 9

## ATTITUDES Attitudes

Is the glass half full or half empty? Have you already climbed half way up the stairs or do you still have half way to go? These questions and the answers you give reflect personal attitudes. As a person who is faced with chronic pain, it is important to be able to see the possibilities instead of the impossibilities. Since your pain began, there have been many changes in your life style. For some there have been major changes. Some of you may not be able to work at your job, to perform certain chores, or even to enjoy the day.

### **Yesterday, Tomorrow, Today**

Yesterday is a cancelled check;  
Tomorrow is a promissory note;  
Today is the only cash you have—  
So spend it Wisely.

Kay Lyons

Many of us preface statements with " I can't" instead of " I choose not to." It is not surprising that many people with chronic pain constantly struggle to remain optimistic. There seems to be nothing of any worth or importance

that they can achieve. The pain seems to overshadow everything else in life; however a change in personal attitudes can shed a completely different light on things.

Your attitude has a tremendous effect on your ability to function. If you believe that you are unable to fulfill your role as husband, wife, provider, etc., then you will probably be unable to do so. Just stop and think a minute about what you are really saying. The word "can't" expresses your belief that it is impossible for you to accomplish anything. "Can't" allows you to quit. No one will expect anything of you, and in time you will not see yourself as useful in any way.

Some people might even think of suicide when they feel they are no longer needed or serve no purpose. Let's look at a few examples of how we might change "can't" thinking into considering other ways of thinking. The following examples are hypothetical and meant to be used as a learning tool.

### Examples:

1. Going out to dinner once a week had been standard for the Millers. But, since Mrs. Miller developed chronic pain, they rarely go to dinner. She no longer works outside the home and has lost contact with most of her co-workers. She tells her husband that getting dressed, sitting on uncomfortable chairs, and the amount of time away from home and her ice packs is just not worth the effort. "I can't go to dinner anymore." She tells her husband.

Can't she? Perhaps she is choosing not to go. Let's look at what she could do to address all her concerns. She could choose a very casual place where casual clothes are acceptable dress, one that has comfortable booths or chairs. A few visits to nearby restaurants identify some with a suitable arrangement. They could plan to dinner early, before the crowds, to reduce the length of time away from home. Limiting how far they will travel will also help. By planning, Mrs. Miller can get out at least once a week; the choice is her's. She must discover her "can do" attitude.

2. A construction worker has had three back surgeries and has been told that he may not return to work that involves heavy physical labor. He can no longer lift heavy materials for eight hours a day. He has two choices. The first is to remain at home and allow his body to become increasingly unfit. If he makes this choice, the muscles that he used for walking become weak, and walking for even a short time increases his pain level. He remains in this patient role for a year and sees no improvement. His activity level is reduced greatly in that

time and so is his interest in life. Others who come into contact with him slowly drift away because they no longer have anything in common with him. He becomes isolated from others and no longer has any desire to leave the house. He is, in the truest sense of the word, an unperson.

A better choice is to explore areas of employment. Although he understands that he cannot resume his old profession, he knows that if he allows his limitations to make him a prisoner in his own house he will surely get worse. He must learn a new field where he can manage with his limitations, perhaps even return to school. This choice does not allow his pain to keep him inactive. To obtain the training necessary to seek employment may take some time, but he is doing something for himself. He has made a commitment to remain an active part of society. He does not see his options as only black and white; rather, he explores the rainbow of choices available to him.

3. Think about the last time that you declined to do something because of your pain. Something that you believed you could not do. Write it in the space below.



Now, take some time and think about ways that you could have changed your “I can’t” attitude into “I might be able to.” Clearly there are some things that we can’t do, but chances are there are ways to make anything possible.

Fill in the two list:

I can’t because . . .

I can if I . . .

There is always room for change. Perhaps your list will help you to realize that some of the “disabilities” you believe you have can be changed to “abilities.” The ACPA believes that everyone is able to do something but each different limitations.

It is important that everyone faced with chronic pain realize that the pain has placed limitations on us, but that it hasn't made us incapable of living. If we can't be productive to some degree, our self-esteem drops to a dangerous level. If we're no longer willing to try anything at all, our self-esteem disappears.

In order for each of us to have the energy and willingness to explore new options and life styles we must have a support system. Family members are an important source of support. They must be willing to allow us the time to regain control of our lives. We must allow ourselves the time to explore all the possibilities and choose an area we might like.

If you go back to the chapter on setting personal goals you will see that one of the questions you must ask yourself is about growing up. Think back to what you might have tried in the past. You have abilities, but you must discover them. And it is your attitude that will allow you the time and energy to find out exactly what you want. No one can ever go back to the way it used to be, regardless of a pain problem. It is important that you learn from the past and continue to look to the future, to explore new areas in your life.

With a true determination to overcome your pain problem to the best of your

ability and with the proper skills, there is an excellent chance that you can improve your life style. Just remember to ask yourself from time to time, "What is it that I can do and want to do?" instead of always telling yourself, "I can't." **Anything Is Possible If You Choose to Do It!**

*Obstacles are what you see  
when you take your eyes  
off your goal.*

*Anonymous*

# Learning to Live With Others

# Chapter 10

## YOUR BASIC RIGHTS Your Basic Rights

Many people with pain have trouble sticking up for themselves. Although not everyone with chronic pain has this problem, a significant number do. To help those of us who have difficulty articulating what we want, feel, or deserve, the ACPA has prepared a list of basic rights. These are rights that we all have because we are human beings. You should never feel guilty insisting on these rights. At first it may seem to go against your nature to speak up for your rights, but the first step in becoming assertive is to become aware of your basic rights. They are printed here to remind you that you have a right to the things that you need and to seek what you want without becoming aggressive or going to the other extreme becoming passive.

We suggest that you read over these rights often. Learn them and put them into practice. If you would like more information on basic rights contact the American Chronic Pain Association National Office for additional materials that take a closer look at how to apply your rights to daily life.

### **1. The right to act in a way that promotes your dignity and self respect.**

This simply means that it is not necessary for you to do anything that you feel would jeopardize your dignity. You may be asked to do something that you believe will make you look foolish. You have the right to refuse any request which you feel is not in your best interest.

### **1. The right to be treated with respect.**

In line with your first basic right is the right to be treated with respect at all times. Each of us is unique and special and deserves the same consideration as the next person. It is not being bold to demand fair and equal treatment by others.

### **1. The right to make mistakes.**

This right is one that we all have but very few of us seem to recognize. It is a rare individual who does not make a mistake from time to time. You have heard the adage, "I learned from my mistakes." Well, it's true.

How often do you remember all the correct things you did? Not very often. But think back on all the mistakes you have made during the past year. You can remember most of them. The point is that we are all human and we all make mistakes. Just realize that you have made a mistake and use it to your advantage as a learning tool. Living with chronic pain is a learning experience for the rest of your life.

1. **The right to do less than you are humanly capable of doing.**

Recognizing your limitations is important if you are to be successful in dealing with your pain. Knowing when to stop is extremely helpful. Also, there are times when you may not feel motivated to do anything. Sometimes people feel that they must be productive every minute of the day in order to justify their existence on this earth. Not so. Be good to yourself and allow free time to do what you want, even if it means doing nothing at all. And don't wait until you "deserve" to relax or you probably never will stop.

1. **The right to change your mind.**

"If I said I would do something, then I am going to do it no matter what!" might be said by those who never allow room in their thinking to change their minds. In spite of all that may have occurred during the day, they will not cancel evening plans. This type of behavior is dangerous. You may be approached by someone who knows just the right moment to ask a favor of you. Because you are off guard, you agree to do something you really don't want to do. There is no reason you cannot change your mind if you find that you have made a commitment to something you don't want to do. Having this flexibility can cut down greatly on the amount of stress in your life.

1. **The right to ask for what you want.**

If you do not express what is on your mind, it is very likely that your needs will not be met because no one knows what they are. We all assume that others will know how we feel or what we want, but no one can read our minds. If you don't speak for yourself, you will find yourself being disappointed, receiving something you do not want.

1. **The right to take time to slow down and think before you respond.**

Remember this one. It is useful on many occasions. When a request is

made of you, rely on this right to be fair to yourself and the person making the request. A good response for this rule is: "Let me think about it and I will get back to you."

This allows you the time to remove yourself from the situation and make an independent decision about what you really want to do. You are being fair to the friend by letting him or her know you will respond...later. This right allows you to step back and be objective about the situation while you decide for yourself without outside pressure.

### 1. The right to feel that you don't have to explain everything you do and think.

Unknowingly, many people with pain find themselves excusing their moody behavior because of the pain.

We tend to justify our actions by citing the pain as the main reason for them, and this behavior becomes a part of us.

Remember, when you are requested to do something you do not want to do, say "No." No explanation is necessary. When you find yourself in an uncomfortable situation, you needn't explain at length your reasons for your actions.

As an good example, when you return an item to a store, do you find yourself giving the clerk many reasons why you are returning it? "I want to return this," is all that is necessary. When you feel uneasy about yourself, you develop a need to over-explain your actions.

### 1. The right to say "no" and not feel guilty.

Not every question can be answered with a "yes", yet many of us find ourselves to be "yes people", the one everyone comes to when they want a "yes" answer. You have the right to refuse a request, and there is no reason to feel guilty if you are sincere in your response. It may take an internal struggle, but saying "no" is possible. Eventually, this response will become comfortable.

### 1. The right to ask for information.

Although the only dumb question is the one that is never asked, there are those of you who would rather walk a mile out of your way than ask

directions. The right to ask for information is very helpful when you are visiting your doctor. If you don't ask questions, he will not know that you do not understand what is happening in your treatment. It is up to you to request more information about a medication, type of treatment, or test.

**1. The right to feel good about yourself.**

"Never think too highly of yourself or others will see you as conceited." That is a familiar thought to many. But, if you don't like yourself, how do you expect others to like you? They can easily pick up how you feel about yourself by your conversations or actions. There is nothing wrong with liking who you are. Just becoming involved in a self-help program to gain a better understanding of your pain and how you can regain control of your life is reason enough to be proud of who you are.

**1. The right to ask for help or assistance.**

Needing help does not signify weakness, yet many of us feel that if it is necessary to ask for anyone's help or assistance, we are weak or helpless. At some point each of us needs the help of others. Use this rule with good judgment.

**1. The right to disagree.**

Sometimes we think that to be popular we must always give positive responses. But how many times have you asked questions, or asked for advice, because you wanted an honest answer, not because you wanted agreement? When we don't express your true feelings, we can cause ourselves tension or stress. For those of us who have chronic pain, those feelings of tension or stress may cause increased pain levels.

Your opinion is valuable and should be expressed even when it is a negative one.

**1. The right to ask "why?"**

People do not always express their ideas and requests clearly. When a request is made of you and the purpose or reason is unclear, ask, "Why?" In dealing with the medical community, this right is very useful. If you understand exactly what is going on with your treatment, your stress is likely to be reduced; and your treatment may be more effective.

**1. The right to be listened to and taken seriously when expressing your feelings.**

You have the right to express your own feelings. Putting others above you in importance is only hurting you. Anything that you say is either a statement of fact or an expression of your feelings.

Facts can be documented. Feelings are an internal response to an external situation. Your feelings are your interpretation of how you see a given situation. There is no right or wrong when it comes to feelings, so what you say is important to the conversation.

This might be a good time for you to make a list of what you feel your personal rights are. The ones listed above provide you with a starting place in thinking about how you want to deal with the world. Take time now and think back on situations in which you felt as if you were not given equal and fair treatment. What type of right would have aided you in that particular situation?

My rights are . . .

Depending on your life situation, your specific rights may be quite different. By using your basic rights you're saying several things to others. The first is that you like yourself—asking for fair and equal treatment is a statement of self-worth. The second is that you're their equal. Each of us has the same

basic value. The kind of treatment you'll receive from others depends on where you choose to place yourself in relation to them.

# Chapter 11

## Assertiveness Assertiveness

What does assertiveness have to do with pain? Why is it important to become an assertive person? Exactly what is assertiveness? Why should you become assertive? The only way to have your needs met is to make them known.

There are three basic ways to assert yourself with others, three ways to express yourself so that others will know what you're saying or what you're asking. You may be:

1. **Aggressive** -- acts in a hostile fashion
2. **Non-assertive** -- holds back thoughts, ideas, and needs, or expresses them in a self-deprecating way
3. **Assertive** -- (1) states positively; affirming; declares with assurance; (2) bold; confident; (3) demonstrates the existence of (*assert* his rights)<sup>2</sup>

Let's explore each communication style and examine how each behavior affects you and those around you.

The following compares the three types of behavior we've just defined. This comparison points out the distinctive features of each type of behavior.

### A Comparison of Nonassertive, Assertive and

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<sup>2</sup> Downs, Jim, *The Book of Positive Qualities*, Time Warner Company, New York, NY 1996, p. 55.

## Aggressive Behavior

**Nonassertive:** This type of behavior is characterized by an inability to express wants, ideas, and feelings or by expressing them in a self-deprecating way (putting oneself down when making a request, i.e. "You know how dumb I am about following a map. Will you drive?") Nonassertive behavior makes you feel anxious and disappointed with yourself, and you may become angry and resentful of the other person involved.

The feelings of others, when dealing with a nonassertive person, range from guilt at taking advantage of the situation to superiority at being able to control another so easily. Their feelings toward the nonassertive person range from irritation at not knowing what the nonassertive person wants, to pitying the nonassertive person's inability to express himself and finally, to feeling disgust toward the nonassertive person.

The nonassertive person can be difficult. Such people seldom tell you what they really want. They allow you to make decisions for them and take responsibility for their actions. Being nonassertive is being uncommitted or unfulfilled. While nonassertive people think it is easier to say nothing, to neither offer their opinions nor express their desires, eventually they become filled with resentment and bitterness because they feel used and left out.

### Example:

A good example of nonassertive behavior is when you and a friend are deciding on a restaurant for lunch. Neither of you really says what you prefer, saying instead, "I don't care. What do you feel like eating?" Meanwhile, you are thinking, "I hope we don't have to eat in that greasy spoon we ate in last time." And much to your dismay, the friend just happens to mention that very place. Being nonassertive, you say, "Fine by me," but all the while you are eating, you're resenting your friend for choosing this particular place. Instead of making your wants known, you vow to yourself during lunch that you will never again make a lunch date with this friend.

What is gained by all this? True, you did not hurt your friend's feelings by disagreeing with the choice of restaurants, but do you really think it would have been offensive if you suggested another place instead? People can't read our minds. Unless we tell them what we want, they'll never know. Often people who come into contact with a nonassertive person become irritated with that person. It is irritating when information must be pried out of someone, even though that person's desire is to please and not make waves.

**Assertive:** An assertive person is able to express wants, ideas, and feelings in a direct and appropriate manner. People who exhibit assertive behavior are usually confident and feel good about themselves, both at the time and later.

Individuals who communicate with an assertive person usually feel respect for him. People appreciate openness and honesty in others because it makes them feel that they are being taken seriously. Assertive people are usually respected for their honesty and willingness to express their opinions.

People who are assertive usually get what they want. Relationships are improved when people behave assertively because each person knows exactly what the other feels and needs. The entire situation promotes the dignity and self-respect of all parties involved. Being assertive makes you feel good.

**Example:**

Let's use the example of the same friend making the decision on a restaurant. You know exactly what you're in the mood for, a salad and a bowl of soup. You know that both of you enjoyed the soup and salad bar at the Corner Restaurant a few weeks ago. You say, "How about the Corner Restaurant? I'm in the mood for a salad and some soup. What do you think?" You're expressing what you want, while still giving your friend the opportunity to make other suggestions.

**Aggressive:** People who insist on their wants, ideas, and feelings at the expense of others are aggressive. Aggressive people usually feel self-righteous and superior at the time, but often their aggressive behavior leads them to feel embarrassment later. Other people feel humiliation and hurt when dealing with an aggressive person. They feel angry and resentful toward the aggressor.

Aggressive behavior is always at the expense of someone else. Many times aggressive people feel a sense of revenge, of "getting even," as they attempt to justify their behavior. While aggressive behavior is a way of venting anger or feeling superior, it is a sure way to turn people away from you.

**Example:**

We all know people who make a loud noise to get their point across at the expense of others. An example of aggressive behavior is the husband who, after getting dressed in the morning, screams at his wife for not taking his

shirts to the cleaners the day before. He gives her no chance to defend herself. She immediately feels hurt, but chooses to say nothing, hoping his bad mood will pass. She feels that it wouldn't do her any good to explain why she was unable to do as he requested.

The husband gets his point across, but at the expense of his wife. He never stops to think about the effect his shouting might have on her or what possible explanation she might have. He can't see past his own needs. He may walk away from the situation feeling superior, domineering, or, after giving the situation second thought, he may feel guilty.

We often go out of our way to avoid aggressive people. When we think of them, we have feelings of anger and resentment.

The three types of behavior seem very simple on paper. It's important to become a more assertive person. Often people with pain allow pain to become the determining factor in life. We consider what the pain will be like; and instead of coming right out and saying "No," we just say, "I'm not up to it today." We don't take responsibility for our actions, we allow the pain to be our universal excuse for all of our behavior.

So how do you become assertive? It takes practice and time. One of the most helpful tools we have is our basic rights. They are designed to allow you to promote your dignity and self-respect by expressing your needs, wants, and desires in appropriate ways. Use these rights often; they'll help you become more comfortable with yourself and the many situations you encounter.

But what does assertiveness have to do with pain? We already pointed out that it permits you to take responsibility for your actions, but there is another connection to pain. Think of a time when you were either nonassertive or aggressive. Afterward, how did you feel physically? Most times the result of this kind of behavior is tension. Your muscles tighten and you feel inadequate. Tense muscles have a direct effect on your level of pain. You can achieve some control over muscle tension through assertive behavior and, on many occasions, eliminate the feelings which caused it.

Your pain is real—but who you are and how you deal with day-to-day situations does have a direct effect on your degree of pain. Developing assertive behavior will take effort and learning. It won't always be effective, but it will help you feel better about yourself and may reduce your pain. Assertive behavior is the most desirable; but all of us, at times, tend toward the other behaviors mentioned. We all have the right to make mistakes. Having a better understanding of how our behavior affects ourselves and those around

us will help us understand that any given situation almost always includes others. Stop and think before responding. We all have that right.

## Assertive Skills

### Basic Assertion

Basic assertion is simply standing up for your rights, opinions, feelings, or wants. Honestly saying "yes" or "no" is a basic assertion. In previous chapters we spoke of your basic rights. These rights apply to your everyday life. You have the right to express your opinions or feelings on any matter.

**Example:** "I do not think Harry is a nice person."

This is a statement of your own beliefs. There is no right or wrong answer to the issue of whether Harry is nice. You are just stating your viewpoint on this issue. There are many such issues on which you will be asked your opinion. They can range from your taste in wines to the candidate you prefer in an election. When you are able to express your opinion, you are telling others you are comfortable with who you are, and that you feel good about yourself.

Quite often you will be asked a question that can be easily answered with a "yes" or "no" reply. By keeping your answer to "yes" or "no," you have, in fact, used basic assertion.

**Example:** Q: "Would you like to return this item?"  
A: "Yes, I would."

You've expressed your feelings, the main intent in basic assertion. Many of you would feel impelled to give long-winded explanations as to why you chose to return the item. That isn't necessary. Keeping your answer short and to the point allows you to remain in control of the situation. When you find yourself giving excuses for your actions, you soon find that you've lost control of the situation and allowed others to obtain information you wouldn't have chosen to reveal.

Expressing wants and preferences in terms of Basic Assertion can be done through "I want" statements (i.e., "I want to do this," or "I want you to do this.") Begin your statement with phrases like:

I want.....	I'd like.....
I need.....	I'm curious.....
I would prefer.....	I'd appreciate....

Would you please... I'm interested....

Disagreements are a part of life. When faced with a situation in which you've made someone angry, you might say something like the following to get the situation back into control so that both parties can sit down and discuss the problem together: "I want to know what I did that made you angry, but I don't want you to call me names." With such a statement you've recognized the other person's anger and shown your concern. You've created a starting point from which both sides can discuss the situation. Dealing with an issue from the beginning will prevent anger from building up and making you tense. You must deal with each problem as it arises.

Consider another example of the use of basic assertion. How many times have you been interrupted in the middle of a sentence? It has happened to all of us at one time or another. Most of us stop talking, feeling put off, and allow the other person to talk. You have the right to be heard. You might think about using the following statement when faced with such a situation:

"Excuse me. I'd like to finish what I was saying before we get to your objections," or, "I'd like to finish what I was saying and then I'd like to hear your objections."

In both cases, you've expressed your needs without hurting the other person. Your response was tactful and appropriate.

When a request is made of you, it is important that you express your feelings on the matter. Example: "Yes, I'd like to get together for dinner, but I don't want to go any place where I need to get dressed up."

Once again you're expressing exactly what you want. Your remark hasn't in any way offended the other person. You've made it clear that you'd like to go to dinner; however, you'd prefer to go somewhere casual. You don't have to explain why you don't feel like getting dressed up to go out to dinner. Your statement that you don't want to do it is sufficient.

As you make your wants and needs known, it is acceptable to ask for the opinion of the other person. Example: "I'd like to see you more often, like a couple of times a week. How do you feel about it?"

You have expressed your desire and at the same time you're giving the other person an opportunity to express his thoughts on the matter. You've given him permission to express his opinion. This is very useful when dealing with

a person you know to be nonassertive.

It is helpful to practice basic assertion whenever possible. One of the most difficult situations for a nonassertive person is receiving a compliment. Next time you receive a sincere compliment, try to respond with just a simple, "Thank you."

Example: "I love your blouse. What a lovely color for you."

Response: "Thank you."

A nonassertive person would look at the blouse, think about why she put it on, and respond with something more like:

"This old thing. I was just so tired wearing the same thing day in and day out. I just pulled this out of the back of my closet. It's almost as old as I am. Seems to have faded over the years. No, this is just an old blouse."

Do you see what happened? The nonassertive person managed to turn a sincere compliment into a situation in which she was putting herself down and at the same time putting down the other person for thinking such an "old thing" looked good on her. "Thank you," is the best response; there's no need for the conversation to go any further. In time, with practice, you'll be able to do this without much thought.

## Empathetic Assertion

Empathetic assertion sensitively conveys your recognition of another person's feelings, wants, and/or viewpoints, and is followed by a statement in which you make a request or express your feelings and/or viewpoints.

Assertion with empathy is often effective because people are more likely to accept your assertion when they feel you have some understanding of and respect for their position. It is especially valuable in situations where you tend to overreact in an aggressive way. If you take a moment to try to understand the other person's viewpoint before you react, you are less likely to respond aggressively. On the other hand, your expression of empathy must be sincere in order to be effective. People can usually spot insincere expressions of empathy, and they resent such attempts to manipulate them.

The first part of your communication does not indicate agreement. It simply

acknowledges one or more of the following:

**The situation:** the circumstances that are the basis for your expression of empathy (i.e., pressure, trouble, lack of information, over-work)

**The person's wants:** what the other person might want in a given situation (i.e. to do a good job, to do things his way, to have free time, to have less pressure)

**The person's beliefs:** the other person's view of the situation at hand (i.e., that he has been unfairly treated, that he has been over worked, that his good nature has been abused)

**The person's feelings:** how the person might be feeling emotionally (i.e., irritated, upset, had a bad day, tired, worried)

The second part of your communication is your basic assertion and states your situation, request, beliefs, or feelings. Let us put this type of assertion into some possible situations to demonstrate exactly how it works.

**Two people:** A boss and a secretary

**Situation:** The boss has a letter that must go out in today's mail. The secretary has told her boss that she has to be out on time this evening for personal reasons. It is 4:45 and she is to leave by 5:00 p.m. sharp. The letter will take at least twenty-five minutes to type.

**Conversation:** The boss is asking the secretary to get his letter typed before she leaves the office. "I understand that you have asked to be out on time tonight and you have put in a full day, but it is very important to this account that we get this information in the mail by closing time. I would appreciate it if you'd stay and type the letter."

The boss let his secretary know that he understood her situation; however, he expressed his need at the same time.

**Situation:** Two friends have just had an argument and neither one seems to be willing to concede. It is apparent that they must discuss their feelings before too much time passes and they grow apart.

**Conversation:** One friend finally says, "I

guess you're feeling under pressure and would rather not talk about how you feel, but I'd appreciate it if you would."

The door has been opened to express feelings on both sides. The friend made it known that he was concerned about the situation and that it was important to him to clear the air.

**Situation:** You are expecting weekend guests and your son has ignored all requests to clean his room because he is studying for a test. The job would only take about twenty minutes to do.

**Conversation:** You say to your son, "I realize that you have a big test coming up tomorrow and need time to prepare. However, I have been at work all day and only have two hours to get the house ready for company, so I wish you would take a little time out to straighten your room."

You recognize the pressure your son is under, but at the same time express your need for his help.

It would be unrealistic to say that in each of the above cases there was complete cooperation on both sides. But in making the request of another, you're letting him know you understand his situation while at the same time making your needs clear.

## "I" Language Assertion

Many times it is important for you to let other people know what effect their behavior is having on you. Quite often people say and do things without thinking of how their actions will affect others. To make sure that your needs and wants are met, it is important to be assertive, yet that is not always enough. Communicating what you're feeling at any given time is useful in eliminating undue tension later. How many times have you been faced with a situation, only to be at a loss for words until you're away from the scene? The phrases "I should have..." or "If only..." are two statements that show you to be a victim of your own thoughts.

The ability to deal effectively with a situation as it occurs will reduce the amount of tension you might otherwise feel. Being able to express what you're feeling at the time, while still remaining in control of your emotions, will give you the opportunity to feel good about yourself and the way you're

treated.

"I" language assertion is designed to let others know exactly what you want and how you feel. Using the word "I" allows you to communicate exactly what you are trying to say. Using "I" language assertion places total responsibility for what you say on you. It is clear to the listener that you are expressing your own thoughts and feelings.

There are four parts to "I" language assertion. While they may be expressed in any sequence, saying them in the order shown can help you remain objective while you're delivering your message.

1. Make a nonjudgmental description of a specific behavior of another person. The statement can begin with, "When you..(followed by a description of the action)."
2. Describe as specifically as possible how the other person's behavior concretely affects you. Avoid the phrase "you make me..." Simply describe to the other person the effects of his or her behavior. To give you an example, let us put the first two parts together, "When you don't call me when you know you're going to be late for dinner, I don't know whether to have dinner on time or delay it for a while."
3. Communicate exactly how the situation makes you feel. Begin the sentence with, "I feel..." This allows the other person to know exactly how his behavior made you feel. To resume with the previous example: "I feel uneasy and tense every time I prepare a special dinner, not knowing if you'll be home to enjoy it."
4. Let the person know what you would prefer in the future. Again, let's discuss our example: "I prefer that you call me by two o'clock on days when you're certain you'll be home. Then I can make a special dinner without fear of it being ruined."

Communication is a vital part of being assertive. If you don't let others know what you want or how you feel, they'll continue with the same sort of behavior, unaware of its effect on you. Quite often we believe that others can read our minds, feeling that they know us well enough that they should know exactly what we want. NOT SO! You have to be assertive and express yourself.



Take some time now to work on a response to a situation in which you've found yourself and which you'd have handled differently if given the opportunity

## **Example**

**Situation:** Spending a night at home with my family and being ignored.

### **Examples of Responses:**

**Description of behavior:** When you sit in the living room and talk with each other but never ask me my opinion or what I have been doing,

**Concrete effect(s):** I feel as if you don't even recognize my presence and it hurts me to think that you don't care enough to ask me what I am thinking or feeling.

**Statement of emotion:** I am hurt, angry, and I feel like I'm not a part of this family.

**Basic assertion:** I need... I want ... I need you to show me that you care enough about me to include me in your conversations.

Now take a moment and use one of your own experiences to complete the exercise below.

**Situation:**

**Example of Responses:**

**Description of behavior:**

**Concrete effect(s)**

**Statement of emotion:**

**Basic assertion: I need... I want...**

With practice you will be able to deal more effectively with situations and feel good about yourself.

## Assertiveness Inventory

The following is designed to allow you the opportunity to find out exactly how assertive you are. Take time to answer each question. This isn't a test, only a way for you to gain a better understanding of yourself and what some of your needs may be.

1. Do you generally express what you feel  yes  no
2. Do you find it difficult to make decisions?  yes  no
3. Are you openly critical of others' ideas, opinions, behavior?  yes  no
4. Do you hold your tongue when someone takes your place in line?  yes  no
5. Do you often avoid people or situations for fear of embarrassment?  yes  no
6. Do you usually have confidence in your own judgment?  yes  no
7. Do you insist that your spouse or roommate take on a fair share of household chores?  yes  no
8. Are you prone to "fly off the handle"?  yes  no
9. When a salesman makes an unusual effort, do you find it hard to say "no," even though the merchandise is not really what you want?  yes  no
10. When a late-comer is waited on before you are, do you call attention to the situation?  yes  no
11. Are you reluctant to speak up in a discussion or debate?  yes  no
12. If a person has borrowed money (or a book, garment, thing of value) and is overdue in returning it, do you mention it?  yes  no
13. Do you continue to pursue an argument after the other person has had enough?  yes  no

14. When a person is highly unfair, do you say so?  yes  no
15. Are you disturbed if someone watches you at work?  yes  no
16. If someone keeps kicking or bumping your chair in a movie or lecture, do you ask the person to stop?  
 yes  no
17. Do you find it difficult to maintain eye contact when talking to another person?  yes  no
18. In a restaurant, when your meal is improperly prepared or served, do you ask the waiter/waitress to correct the situation?  yes  no
19. When you discover merchandise is faulty, are you afraid to return it for an adjustment?  yes  no
20. Do you show your anger by name-calling or obscenities?  yes  no
21. Do you try to be a wallflower or "a piece of the furniture" in social situations?  yes  no
22. Do you often step in and make decisions for others?  yes  no
23. Are you unable to openly express love and affection?  yes  no
24. Are you able to ask your friends for small favors or help?  yes  no
25. Do you think you always have the right answer?  yes  no
26. When you differ with a person you respect, are you able to speak up for your own viewpoint?  yes  no
27. Are you able to refuse unreasonable requests made by friends?  yes  no
28. Do you have difficulty complimenting or praising others?  yes  no

29. If you are disturbed by someone's smoking near you, can you say so? [  
] yes  no
30. Do you shout or use bullying tactics to get others to do as you wish? [  
] yes  no
31. Do you finish other peoples' sentences for them?  yes  no
32. Do you get into physical fights with others, especially with strangers?  
 yes  no
33. At family meals, do you control the conversation?  yes  no
34. When you meet a stranger, are you the first to introduce yourself and  
begin conversation?  yes  no

## Assertiveness Inventory Evaluation

Now let us look at each question and see what your answer indicated. At the end of each question you will see the words "assertive", "nonassertive", or "aggressive", which indicate the type of behavior exhibited in the given situation if you answered "yes" to the question.

1. Do you generally express what you feel? ...One of your basic rights permits you to express your feelings. There are no wrong feelings. We all have a right to our opinion. Trying to suppress feelings can lead to increased stress levels. *Assertive*

2. Do you find it difficult to make decisions? ...If you have trouble making up your mind, it may be an indication that you do not have a clear understanding of the situation or that you are not comfortable taking responsibility for your actions on the given matter. Needing more information would exhibit assertive behavior; not feeling comfortable with assuming responsibility would be nonassertive. *Nonassertive*

3. Are you openly critical of others' ideas, opinions, behavior? ...We often express what we feel before considering how our actions or words will affect another person. If we want others to consider our feelings we must show them that we understand how they feel and not be openly critical of them. *Aggressive*

4. Do you hold your tongue when someone "cuts" in line? ...Is it easier for you to remain quiet while you become angry inside? Are you afraid to speak up for your rights? Holding feelings in creates stress. *Nonassertive*

5. Do you avoid people or situations for fear of embarrassment? ...Consider the question, "Do you like yourself?" which was discussed in Chapter 4. You have a right to act in a way that will promote your dignity and gain you respect, you also have a right to do things out of the ordinary. There is no such thing as normal. We can be a little crazy to survive in today's world. Attempting to be too controlled over your actions is not always good. *Nonassertive*

6. Do you have confidence in your own judgment? ...You have a right to your own opinion. You also have a right to make mistakes. You must believe in yourself, knowing that you will make mistakes from time to time. *Assertive*

7. Do you insist that your spouse or roommate take on a fair share of household chores? ...Being able to communicate your needs and having them understood is assertive behavior. *Assertive*
8. Are you prone to "fly off the handle"? ...Allowing emotions to build up inside without dealing with them can lead to "flying off the handle". One who allows feelings to go unnoticed will eventually be reminded of those feelings and often it is in a situation that does not warrant such a reaction. *Aggressive*
9. When a salesman makes an effort, do you find it hard to say "no," even though the merchandise is not really what you want? ...Believing that you owe the salesman something for the time he spent with you is nonassertive. The salesman chose to try and sell his merchandise to you, to spend time with you. You do not owe him anything. You have the right to say no and not feel guilty. *Nonassertive*
10. When a late-comer is waited on before you are, do you call attention to the situation? ...Once again, believing in yourself and your rights is very important if you are to become an assertive person. You are entitled to the same service as the next person. *Assertive*
11. Are you reluctant to speak up in a discussion or debate? ...If you are unsure of yourself you will have difficulty expressing your point of view. Believe in yourself. *Nonassertive*
12. If a person has borrowed money (or a book, garment, thing of value) and is overdue in returning it, do you mention it? ...Would you be upset if someone asked you to return an item you borrowed? You are not imposing on another's rights by asking for what belongs to you. *Assertive*
13. Do you continue to pursue an argument after the other person has had enough? ...Needing to have the final word is a sign of aggressive behavior. *Aggressive*
14. When a person is highly unfair, do you say so? ...You should make it known when you have been treated unjustly. *Assertive*
15. Are you disturbed if someone watches you at work? ...Being confident in what you are doing does not mean that it would not bother you to have someone watching you work. Sometimes we need quiet as well as space to do our work. *Assertive*
16. If someone keeps kicking or bumping your chair in a movie or lecture,

do you ask the person to stop? ...It is not unreasonable to make this kind of a request. *Assertive*

17. Do you find it difficult to maintain eye contact when talking to another person? ...If you have a problem maintaining eye contact, chances are you are not comfortable with what you are saying or the other person is in some way a threat to you. *Nonassertive*

18. In a restaurant, when your meal is improperly prepared or served, do you ask the waiter/waitress to correct the situation? ...You should get what you paid for. *Assertive*

19. When you discover merchandise is faulty, are you afraid to return it for an adjustment? ..Many people have trouble returning merchandise. Their reaction is to try to justify their reason for returning it. Many times they allow the salesperson to put them on the defensive by their apologetic attitude. *Nonassertive*

20. Do you show your anger by name-calling or obscenities? ...Being afraid to show anger is a common problem with many people, so they allow their anger to build up. That is when they say things they do not mean to say. *Aggressive*

21. Do you try to be a wallflower or "a piece of the furniture" in social situations? ...No one is better than anyone else. You should not feel uncomfortable when in a crowd. *Nonassertive*

22. Do you often step in and make decisions for others? ...Trying to be in control at all times is a sign of aggressive behavior. Do you really want to take responsibility for others' decisions? *Aggressive*

23. Are you unable to openly express love and affection? ...Expressing emotions, whether they are positive or negative, is difficult for those who do not feel completely comfortable with who they are. *Nonassertive*

24. Are you able to ask your friends for small favors or help? ...You have the right to ask for help or assistance. *Assertive*

25. Do you think you always have the right answer? ...We all make mistakes. If you really believe you have to be correct all the time, you don't really believe in yourself. *Aggressive*

26. When you differ with a person you respect, are you able to express your

own viewpoint? *Assertive*

27. Are you able to refuse unreasonable requests made by friends?  
...Believing in your right to make up your own mind in accordance with your values and time frame is okay. Doing things because you want to is much better than doing things because you feel you have to. *Assertive*

28. Do you have difficulty complimenting or praising others? *Nonassertive*

29. If you are disturbed by someone's smoking near you, can you say so?  
...It is not necessary to expose yourself to smoke which is unpleasant for you. *Assertive*

30. Do you shout or use bullying tactics to get others to do as you wish?  
...Making a sincere request can and should be done in a way that promotes dignity and respect for all. *Aggressive*

31. Do you finish other people's sentences for them? ...We all speak and think at different rates. Some people take longer to verbalize what they are feeling. *Aggressive*

32. Do you get into physical fights with others, especially with strangers?  
...To prove your ability either physically or emotionally is necessary for those who feel inferior to others. *Aggressive*

33. At family meals, do you control the conversation? *Aggressive*

34. When you meet a stranger, are you the first to introduce yourself and begin conversation? *Assertive*

You may find that you've answered "yes" in each of the categories. That isn't unusual. We all have varied reactions to situations depending on mood, atmosphere, physical feelings, and stress levels. What's important is to become aware of our actions or reactions. Try to change behaviors you frequently display which are nonassertive or aggressive.

Editor's note: If you are attending an ACPA group, you might be faced with members who seem to talk about nothing but their pain. Being assertive is your responsibility. If you don't want to listen to their pain problem indefinitely, use your assertiveness skills to remind them of meeting rules.

**Example:** "I have a pretty good idea of what you must be going through. I also have a pain problem, but I really want to know how I can regain control

over my life. When you constantly talk about your pain it makes me think about my pain and then I experience more pain. Why don't we see what the others have to offer in the way of coping skills. I really believe that I can learn a lot from this group."

As discussed earlier, keeping pain talk to a minimum can be difficult for group members. This is an excellent place for members to do role playing so that they can reinforce the issue of avoiding pain talk and how to keep it under control. Have one member start to complain about his pain. (It is a good idea to select a member who does not usually talk about his pain.) The role playing will enable the group to address the issue of pain talk and be able to confront the issue while they're feeling comfortable "only role playing." Allow each member to have an opportunity to do this exercise. In the future when newer members want to talk about their pain, this particular exercise will help members handle the situation.

## **Additional Assertiveness Skills**

To aid you further in becoming more assertive the following skills can be useful.

**Broken Record:** A technique that uses calm repetition. Saying what you want over and over again teaches persistence without having to rehearse arguments or angry feelings beforehand. This helps you to be "up" while dealing with others. It also allows you to feel comfortable in ignoring manipulative verbal side traps, argumentative baiting, and irrelevant logic while sticking to your point.

**Example:** You're in the store with your young child. She asks you to buy her a toy. You've told her no, but she continues to ask. Many of us would give in just to quiet the child. Try to keep repeating your answer to her over and over. She will soon learn that you aren't going to change your mind and will stop asking. This skill is a test of will, but it is effective.

**Fogging:** A technique that allows you to accept manipulative criticism by acknowledging to your critic the possibility that there may be some truth in what he says, while allowing you to remain your own judge of what you do.

Fogging allows you to receive criticism comfortably without becoming anxious or defensive, while giving no reward to those using manipulative criticism.

**Example:** You are at a party with a close friend. He just shared a story about you with a group of people. The story was about something that you didn't mean to be shared with others and don't want to pursue. By fogging, or not giving credit or denial to the story, you put a quick end to the story and the conversation moves in a different direction. You might say, "You might be right, but I don't remember that. Must not have been very important."

**Negative Assertion:** A technique that allows you to accept your errors and faults (without having to apologize) by strongly and sympathetically agreeing with hostile or constructive criticism. It helps you to look more comfortably at negatives in your own behavior or personality without feeling defensive and anxious or resorting to denial of real error, while at the same time reducing your critic's anger or hostility.

**Example:** You're one hour late for a lunch date with a friend. When you arrive, your friend naturally is upset. Rather than give the reason for being late, you can simply agree with your friend that it was in bad taste to be so late and that you should have called. This puts a quick end to the issue of being late and you can get on with your lunch.

There are nonverbal components of negative assertion. The tone of voice is neither apologetic nor hostile. You are asserting your error, not simply admitting it. Negative assertion is similar to fogging, but it differs in two ways. You actually made an error or possess the fault (rather than admitting to the possibility.) You're also agreeing with your critic's value system that your act was negative (dumb, forgetful, poor judgment, etc.).

**Negative Inquiry:** This technique uses active prompting in seeking criticism about yourself. You prompt your critic to be more assertive and less dependent on manipulative ploys. This allows you to learn about yourself by prompting the other person to express honest negative feelings and improve communication.

**Example:** You're trying on a dress/suit in a department store. You're really not sure if the style suits you. You're afraid it makes you look ten pounds heavier. In order to get an honest response from your friend you say, "This makes me look a little bit heavier than I am, doesn't it?" In this way you've stated your negative thought and made it easy for your friend to answer

honestly.

**Free Information:** Free information is any information besides a "yes" or "no" answer that a person gives about himself/herself. It may not have anything to do with the question you asked. Listen to the words and comment on them. If you ask questions that begin with what, when, or how, the reply will usually furnish you with more free information than questions that can be answered "yes" or "no." For example, "What are some things you like most about your work?" will give you more free information than, "Do you like your work?"

Assertiveness is important if you are to become a person and leave the patient role behind. You must begin to accept responsibility for your actions rather than allow your pain to be an excuse for your behavior.

## Assertiveness Summary

The following information summarizes the information about assertiveness. Read it, and if you belong to an ACPA support group, feel free to ask the group questions. If you are not involved in an ACPA group, you can check local community colleges or adult learning centers where assertiveness training is frequently available.

1. It is necessary to learn to express your wants, ideas, and feelings in direct and appropriate ways so that you may:

- a. communicate better
- b. feel confident
- c. feel good about yourself at the time and later
- d. be respected and valued
- e. get what you want
  - a. improve your self-confidence
  - b. improve your relationships

2. Types and examples of behavior:

- a. Non-Assertive--Does not express wants, ideas, and feelings, or expresses them in a self-deprecating way
- b. Assertive--Expresses wants, ideas, and feelings in a direct and appropriate way
- c. Aggressive--Expresses wants, ideas, and feelings at the expense of others
  - i. Active Aggressive--Directs anger openly at other people
  - ii. Passive Aggressive--Expresses anger in an indirect and sometimes camouflaged manner

3. Passivity can occur when:

- a. You have feelings of guilt

b.

You're confused or frightened.

c.

You don't know what you want.

d.

You believe that you and your feelings and wants aren't important.

e.

You believe that you're helpless.

f.

You wish to avoid conflict and be liked by everyone. You aren't aware that there's a difference between being liked and being respected.

g.

You believe that "nice people" don't get angry or have bad feelings or that "nice people" never show those feelings

h.

You've created a role for yourself as a passive person and believe that others won't accept you if you change.

4. Aggressive behavior can occur when:

a.

You believe that being aggressive is the only way you'll be respected or listened to.

b.

You lack confidence and believe that being aggressive is a way of proving yourself.

c.

You don't wish to appear to be passive or frightened.

d.

You have pent up feelings and failed to act assertively when problems were small enough to be managed and dealt with.

e.

You don't get what you want or are unable to have an impact on another person.

f.

You have created a role for yourself as an aggressive person, and you believe that you can't change and still be accepted by others.

g.

You wish to avoid feeling guilty. You may not realize that there is a difference between being responsible and to feeling guilty.

# Chapter 12

## COMMUNICATION SKILLS Communication Skills

To express our wants, needs, and desires open communication is a must. Many of us lack the necessary skills to communicate effectively. Hearing what is said is only part of communication. Communication can often be unclear. We only comprehend about 25% of what we hear. The majority of us are just too busy or preoccupied to make the effort to understand what was said. In many cases what we hear and see may seem simple and clear, however there may be hidden meanings or unspoken words. Good communication has two parts, talking and listening.

Identify your needs

In order to meet your needs, you must be able to communicate to others exactly what you want. There are certain skills that can help you to improve your communication. These skills not only help you to articulate your needs but improve your understanding of others. Never assume that people will know what you need. No one can read your mind.

### Repeat what you heard

To make sure you have heard exactly what people have said to you it is helpful to repeat what you thought they said back to them. This skill can be helpful when dealing with your physician or a family member. You can begin your sentence with, "This is what I heard you say; correct me if I misunderstood." Then repeat what you thought you heard the person say. By doing this it is clear to both the speaker and the listener what has been said. There will be no misunderstandings later.

### Use feeling words

The ability to communicate your feelings is helpful when you are attempting to tell someone what is going on within you. Simply identify and name the feeling you have, i.e., "I am angry with you," or, "When you do that, it makes me happy." Refer to the list of "feelings" words on pages 70-71 to help you identify feelings.

### Verify emotions of the listener

Another helpful tool is to verify with the other person your impression of his emotions. This is your interpretation of what you think the other person might be feeling. Example: "You seem angry with me," or, "You don't seem to be interested in what I am saying. Are you bored?" This gives you a benchmark to go by and allows both parties to have a clear understanding of where they stand.

## Aids to Develop Communication Skills

1. Talk to the person instead of about him.
2. Be very specific in what you say.
3. Maintain eye contact with the person you're addressing. You communicate a sense of confidence in yourself when you can look someone in the eye while talking.

4. Personalize. Avoid general statements by using “I” or “you” instead of “it.” Take responsibility for what you are saying with the “I” statement. Example: “Some people don't like to go shopping, you know,” should be changed to, “I don't really want to go shopping today.”
5. Accept responsibility for what you do. Use words that make the actions belong to you, not a third party. By taking responsibility for your actions it is clear to others where you're coming from and it allows you to be in control of the situation. Your awareness of yourself and others and the knowledge that you're responsible for your actions are two of the first steps toward changing your behavior.
6. Be assertive by asking directly for what you want. Assume that the other person has the power and choice to say “yes” or “no.” You have the same power and choice to say “yes” or “no” when other people inform you of their desires.
7. Be aware of what your body tells you. Certain issues will make you tense and nervous., and your body reacts with stiffened movements or increased pain. Notice also how your body feels when you're happy, laughing, in a good mood. By becoming aware of how your body feels and what it is telling you, you can gain a better understanding of yourself and perhaps lessen your pain.

More information about communication is available in the ACPA kit, *Communication Skills*. Contact the National Office for details.

# Chapter 13

## FAMILY INVOLVEMENT Family Involvement

This chapter is written for both the person with pain and his family members. It is important that the family work together to enable the pain person to get back to being a functioning person rather than a dysfunctional patient. It is recommended that you read this chapter with your family.

Many of the feelings people with pain are dealing with are shared by their family members. One common reaction to living with a person with pain is isolation. The family members withdraw from outsiders because they, too, are unable to focus on anything other than the pain problem. They find it difficult to express feelings surrounding the pain or the pain person. Co-workers quickly tire of repetitious conversation about the people with pain, so the family members begin to pull inside themselves, unwilling to become involved with others or in activities outside the home.

Like the person with pain, family members also feel a need to talk to someone, to be understood and cared for. They need to focus on something positive in their lives. Often they feel that they just want to enjoy life again, to be able to laugh. Others insist that if they just knew what their spouses' diagnoses were, they would be able to accept a rehabilitation program. How many people with pain and family members are still seeking an easy way out of their pain problems by looking to medicine to give them the answer?

Living with a person with pain can have a significant effect on children. Frequently, the children begin to feel responsible for the pain and suffering. They may feel that their actions have brought on the pain or their lack of action prolongs the pain. These children are confused and do not understand the depth of the problem. Many children carry far more responsibility than their peers. They hesitate to bring friends home for fear it will disturb the person with pain. When questioned about her friends, one girl said, "I don't have any friends. There isn't any time."

The ACPA has traditionally focused on the person with pain. We are now beginning to work with the spouse and children who are faced with very similar feelings of guilt, fear, anger, abandonment, and worry. In some areas the ACPA has organized support groups to help understand what pain is doing to their lives. Chronic pain is a controlling force not only on the person with

pain but on the entire family.

## **Pain Is a Two-sided Problem**

In many cases family members are as frustrated and angry as those with chronic pain. They also share some of the guilt feelings. Through family groups, family members are able to gain some understanding of the problems faced by person with pain. Family members also have an opportunity to express their needs as they see them. The ACPA works with family members and the pain person so that the pain person may get out of the patient role and back to being a person.

### **Limitations**

Each of us has limitations—not only those who have chronic pain, but also those who don't. The important thing is to recognize our limitations and work around them.

The person with chronic pain need to recognize what's realistic and attainable for. One day they may feel better than usual and be able to be active, while on another day they may be less able to get involved in their "normal" daily activity. Their pain level is not constant; therefore, their activity level will also fluctuate. Family members must understand and accept this.

In the group, members use their basic rights to help each other feel better about themselves and to be who they are, regardless of any limitations they might have. Not feeling it necessary to justify one's behavior is a basic right. This allows each person (as a person not a patient) to choose what he wishes to do, taking into consideration his needs, wants, and desires. Each situation faced by a person with pain is as different as each day and each person must be realistic about what he chooses to do.

### **Joint Responsibility for Recovery**

Responsibility for the individual with chronic pain falls on many different people. First, it falls on the medical community. We look to this community to provide proper medical treatment. Second, we look to the individuals who experience chronic pain. Their responsibility is to become active in their own recovery. The ACPA will help them work toward that goal. We also look to their families for support, understanding, and willingness to accept the person with pain along with his abilities and limitations. A combined effort is essential to reach our final goal of living productively with pain.

## Goals

At the beginning of each month, group members are asked to set realistic goals for themselves. These goals are evaluated on a weekly basis. The purpose of goal setting is to turn the members' attention to what they can do instead of to the things they feel unable to do. In the family group meetings we hope that everyone can gain a better understanding of the kinds of goals that can be set and the role the family can play in achieving these goals.

One reason for setting goals is to give members a reason for getting out of bed in the morning, a purpose in life. Much of their lives has been focused around pain, with no outlet or distractions.

Goals should be focused on something the individual enjoys, something he has always wanted to do, or something that would help him to get back into shape. Often goals involve exercise and weight loss. Either of these can be difficult, not to mention boring, when attempted alone. It is easier if the family gets involved in these goals. Support the person who is taking some responsibility for their recovery by getting involved. Encouragement is something we all need.

Often our members' goals are set around fun things: getting out for a few hours, reconnecting with old friends, learning new skills. All these goals need the same support and encouragement. We hope that you, the family member, will be willing to take time to talk with your spouse, parent, or child and together, as a family, set goals that you can all work toward and support as the person with pain becomes a person again.

## An Exercise for Members and Their Family

It is important for group members to realize that their pain problem is not only affecting them but is affecting their family as well. The following exercise is designed to help the people with pain and family members understand the kinds of feelings each experiences. For the most part the pain person feels helpless and hopeless. Medicine has not removed their pain completely and they are faced with trying to live with continued pain. But family members are faced with their own dilemma dealing with a person who has become very dependent on them for care and emotional support.

Unfortunately, many families lose touch with each other during the long months of pain. They become isolated. They no longer work together but pull apart as their frustration grows.

The first group of questions is written for the person with pain but should also be directed to family members. It is vital that, in learning to live with pain, the family members learn how to communicate feelings as well as become aware of methods that could be helpful to the person with pain in leaving the patient role behind and regaining the role of a person.

### **Group Member Questions:**

1. How important is it for you to communicate to your family exactly how your pain feels, letting them know every time it worsens?

2. When you're explaining in detail about the pain and physical symptoms, what do you hope to gain and what do you expect your family members to do about what you're telling them? What is there to gain?

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3. Do you think your pain is as difficult for your loved ones to accept and deal with as it is for you? Please explain.

4. Do you spend a great deal of time by yourself, away from the family? If yes, what do you do?

5. Are you unable to become involved in planning family activities or to take part in them? If yes, what do you do while they're gone?

6. How does it make you feel to be left behind when the rest of the family goes about their daily routine? Please explain.

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7. Are you able to maintain your role as husband/wife, devoted child, mother/father, provider for the family? Explain your role.

8. Do you like yourself? If yes, please explain what it is that you like. If you don't, please explain why.

9. Do you have trouble sleeping? If yes, what do you do about it?

10. Do you feel guilty because of your inability to be an active part of the family unit? Please explain.

11. Do you find it difficult to be active on a good day for fear that your family would not understand your inability the next day? Please explain.

12. Do you ever doubt that your pain is real? Why?

13. Do you believe your family doubts the realness of your pain? Why do you think that is?

14. Are you assertive with your family, communicating your needs without using your pain to get what you want? How do you accomplish that?

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## Family Questions

The following questions are designed as a first step in recognizing problems that family members must deal with while living with a chronic pain person.

1. Do you know what pain behavior is? If yes, please explain.

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2. Can you learn to ignore it? Why or why not?

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3. After the first few months of trying all the medical treatment available, did you have difficulty accepting the fact that there might not be a cure for your family member's pain? Please explain.

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4. After the pain continued for six months or longer, were you angry with the medical community and its inability to effectively treat your family member?

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5. How did you feel when you realized your family member's pain wasn't going to be relieved but would continue indefinitely? Please explain.

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6. What do you do while your family member lies in bed or remains in the chair? Do you sit at home, carry on without him/her, or try to get him/her involved again?

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7. Do you look at your family member from a different point of view than you did before the onset of the pain? (Do you think he is weak, unwilling, lazy, determined, faking, or uncooperative?) Please explain.

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8. Do you treat your family member like a patient by doing as much as possible for him/her in an attempt to lessen the pain? Why or why not?

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9. Are you willing to continue in the role of care-giver? How does that make you feel?

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10. Do you feel frustrated by your family member's pain?

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11. Are you prepared to take some of the responsibility for your family member by helping him to recover and become involved in building coping skills? What are you willing to do?

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12. Are you the one to make the doctor's appointments, go to the drug store for medication, or take over the pain person's role in the family? Why or why not?

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13. Are you aware that you also have basic rights? If so, do you use them to help you cope?

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14. What are your own personal needs and are they being met?

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15. Do you feel responsible for your family member's suffering? Please explain.

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16. Has your family member gained attention since the illness? If yes, why do you think that is?

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17. Is your life dominated by your family member's pain? Please explain.

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18. Is conversation with your family member focused on issues other than pain?

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19. Do you find your own health suffering because of the family member's pain? Please explain what the problem is. \_

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20. How do you sleep?

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21. Are you happy with who you are? If not, why? If you are, what is your best feature?

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1. Do you feel your family member has gained anything from attending the ACPA meetings, or is the time wasted? Explain

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2. Do you honestly feel your family member is making an attempt to overcome the pain? If yes, in what way? If not, why not?

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3. Have you made it easy for your family member to remain in the patient role by allowing him or her to use the pain as an excuse? What have you done?

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4. Is it important for you to completely understand the pain and suffering or are you becoming insensitive to the complaining?

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5. How do you deal with the complaints? Do you feel a need to fulfill your family member's wishes because of the pain, or do you tend to shut out the complaints? Please explain.

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There are no right or wrong answers to any of these questions. We are attempting to help family members express the feelings they may have denied. It is important to recognize the need for open communication. Family members also need to learn how to help the person with pain become responsible for actions, to stop using the pain as an excuse to remain in the role of patient.

If you would like to learn more about chronic pain and the family, you might be interested in the *ACPA Family Manual*. It is available through the National Office.

# Helping Your Body

# Chapter 14

## STRESS AND RELAXATION Stress and Relaxation

Stress plays an important role in pain management. Your level of pain can be affected by the amount of stress you experience. While your pain is of physical origin, many other areas of your life play a role in your overall well-being.

Stress and tension must be recognized and handled. This chapter points out signs of stress and provides ways to reduce muscle tension.

First, you must be able to recognize the signs of tension. Become aware of what your body is telling you by the way you feel and act. Certain body movements, such as ankle tapping, hair twisting, and tight shoulders, may be signs of stress. Let's look at these individually.

Usually people's bodies will express irritation without their even being aware of what they're doing. Have you ever stood in a long line waiting for tickets or at the grocery store? Next time you find yourself in this situation notice what your body is doing. Do you tap your foot impatiently on the ground? Do you tap your fingers? Or do you clench your teeth? All these mannerisms are signs of personal stress. It is important for you to recognize these signs. Stop for a moment and check on your feet and hands. Are they relaxed or tense? How about your jaw? Is it tight or relaxed?

People who are stressed are easy to spot by the way they hold their bodies. These people sit with their legs coiled tightly around each other.

Remember when you took tests in school. Did you ever get stuck on a question and sit there unknowingly twisting your hair? It was as if all your feelings were being concentrated in that one area. Somehow twisting your hair helped you to release some of your frustration.

Folding your arms or pulling yourself in tightly may be a "keep off" sign to others. They are aware of what your body is telling them. People are also hesitant to approach you if you look as if you are in a bad mood. You're telling people to keep away just by your body language.

A furrowed and frowning brow always looks worried and nervous. Have you

ever seen someone who looks like that? It is almost a natural reaction to tell that person to smile. Such people look as if they have the weight of the world on their shoulders.

Another body sign that expresses feelings is a jutting jaw, which shows an aggressive and tense personality. Clenched fists with white knuckles reflect stress. A gripped thumb may be the first sign of tension. There are many ways your body has of telling you, as well as others, what you're feeling. But what can you do about it?

One of the first statements in this manual, was that one of the most important skills you need to deal with chronic pain is the ability to gain a true understanding of yourself. To become aware of what your body is telling you, you must be able to recognize its signs. You must also know how much stress you can tolerate. Don't ignore what you're feeling, emotionally or physically. When you notice the first signs of tension and stress, do something about it. If you feel that you're being pushed too far, tell the other person. Don't be afraid to say "no" when things are too much for you to handle. If you don't look out for your own best interests, no one else will.

One of your basic rights is to do less than humanly possible. If you see that you have pushed yourself, that you're getting tired, or your energy level is low, slow down. Pushing yourself past your limits is only going to make it more difficult for your body to recover. Recognize personal fatigue and take action to remedy it.

Sometimes to reduce the stress you feel you need to actually remove yourself from the situation. Change your environment, if it is only walking into the next room. Put some space between yourself and the stress so that you can regain control. This strategy may give you time to clear your head and see the problem in a different light. Of course, this is only a temporary solution, but in many cases it gives you needed time to decide what you want to do.

Many stresses occur repeatedly. You find yourself faced with the same situation again and again. The best solution might be to become accustomed to facing the stress. As time goes by you'll find that your coping ability improves. You'll be better prepared to deal with the stress the third or fourth time. If you learn from your experience, you'll be able to prevent a stress response.

When you are well and healthy, when nutrition, exercise, and sleep are adequate, it is easier to cope with stress. Your coping ability and your personal awareness of your needs are keen when you feel good. You are more prepared

to deal with others when you feel good. Take care of yourself and your body.

Creative use of leisure time is important. While some problems do not have solutions, but it may be helpful to remove yourself emotionally from the situation for a while. Try to find a hobby or leisure activity that you can enjoy, one that you actually look forward to doing. Being able to let go for a while will increase your coping ability, and you'll find that things aren't quite as bad as you thought.

Don't ever be afraid of feeling stressed. Don't let it alarm you. Life is full of stresses. Some stress is actually good for you. Being under stress isn't the end of the world. If you find yourself in a stressful situation, deal with it to the best of your ability and learn from the experience. Use it to deepen your understanding of yourself.

Humans are social animals and need the support of others. If we can earn and accept the gratitude of other people and, equally important, are able to show gratitude to them, we can share problems and cope with stress without distress.

## How to Recognize Stress and Tension

One of the most effective ways to recognize how stress affects you is by doing exercise. You can feel the muscles tighten as your stress level builds. As you stretch your muscles it will be clear to you exactly which muscles are tight and which are relaxed. Of course it is not always possible to exercise in stressful situations. Touch your arms and shoulders and feel the muscles. Are your muscles tight or do they give when you touch them? A good place to spot tension is in the back of your neck. Place your hands on your neck and bend your neck forward. Now bring your head back to its natural position. Did you notice the difference between when your neck was stretched down, the muscle tight and hard, and when your head was in its natural position and your muscles were loose and relaxed? Move your head forward and back again a few times. This might help loosen those muscles.

Controlling your breathing may help to relieve stress. Start by taking in a deep breath and holding it for a few seconds. Notice how much tension you feel in your chest? Now, let that breath out and pay attention to the relief that follows. Do this one more time; and as you do, allow the tension in the rest of your body to flow out with your breath. Sometimes it is helpful to imagine your breath as a substance or a color. When you exhale, emptying your lungs of the air,

imagine that your breath is flowing out of your lungs, but instead of going out your mouth, try to visualize your breath going down your arms and out your finger tips. This kind of exercise takes a lot of practice, but it is very effective. For further relaxation techniques the ACPA has tapes and CDs available which can help you increase your relaxation skills.

Another technique is to tighten your muscles as hard as you can...very tight...then tighter. Then let them relax. You probably found out that as you tightened up, you held your breath; and as you relaxed, you let it go. Knowing what your muscles feel like when they are tense will help better understand your body and what it is telling you.

Keeping your breathing steady and even will help you to keep your stress level under control. By placing your hand on your abdomen, right over your navel, you can tell if you're taking short, shallow breaths. If your hand doesn't move, that indicates that you aren't breathing deeply into your abdomen. This kind of breathing is not relaxed. Imagine your hand as a magnet and when you breathe in, allow your breath to be pulled down into your abdominal cavity right beneath your hand. Do this a few times.

There are many ways to relax. People rarely are able to think of more than one thing at a time, and this may be used to help you relax. While you are concentrating on your breathing or your muscles, you cannot be thinking about your pain or the stress. Try this: in your mind count from one to twenty-five and at the same time repeat the alphabet to yourself. You cannot do it. Your mind is only capable of focusing on one thing at a time. So if you really try to maintain some control over your breathing, chances are it will reduce your pain level.

One of the best ways to reduce your stress level is to take time for yourself each day. Allow yourself time to unwind at the end of the day or take a few minutes during the day (for example, at lunch time) and do a few minutes of relaxation exercises.

An excellent opportunity to use your coping skills is demonstrated in the following example.

**Purpose:** This example will show you how to develop a positive approach to daily obstacles, applying techniques such as self-hypnosis, biofeedback, and exercise.

**Situation:** You are at the dentist's office.

**Coping Response:** Try to relax by using self-hypnosis to bake a cake while sitting in his chair. Imagine yourself in you kitchen. Remember everything that would be around you– windows, cabinets, the color of the walls, etc. Now go about making a cake in your mind just as if you were at home. Do not leave out the smallest detail.

**Result:** You will be less aware of the time passing and the work being done in your mouth.

Please take some time to think of a situation where you found yourself becoming tense and write down how you coped with it.

**Situation:** What was taking place when you recognized that you were tense?

**Coping Response:** What situation can you imagine that would take you to another place? Recreate in your mind's eye exactly how this place looks. What were you doing with your hands?

**RESULT:** What was the result of this exercise? Remember, any skill takes practice.

This tool is designed to record your progress with the ACPA relaxation tapes or CDs. There are four exercises. Each exercise is different and it will be your own personal preference as to which one best suits your needs. After listening to your tape or CD, take time to complete the chart below. An exercise chart is provided.

## Relaxation Chart

Tape or CD you listened to: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did you listen to the entire exercise?

2. Where were you when you listened to the tape or CD?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What type of clothing were you wearing?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. How did you feel at the beginning of the exercise? Please note on the graph below.

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What part of the exercise seemed to be the most helpful?

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6. What part of the exercise was the most difficult?

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7. Did you find yourself trying too hard to follow the instructions, which in turn prevented you from benefitting from the exercise?

On a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being very tense and 10 being completely relaxed, fill in the following graph.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
10							
9							
8							
7							

6							
5							
4							
3							
2							
1							
0							

Use a red pencil to chart how you felt before the tape and a blue one to chart how you felt after listening to the tape.

After tracking your progress for two weeks you are likely to have increased your understanding of what relaxation techniques work best for you. With understanding come the specific skills that enable you to regain control over your body.

On a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being very tense and 10 being completely relaxed, fill in the following graph.

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	
10							
9							
8							
7							
6							
5							
4							
3							
2							
1							
0							

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4							
3							
2							
1							
0							

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After tracking your progress for two weeks you are likely to have increased your understanding of what relaxation techniques work best for you. With understanding come the specific skills that enable you to regain control over your body.

## How to get the most out of your relaxation exercise:

Wear loose clothing.

Find a place where no one will disturb you.

Think of an event in your life that creates good feelings, e.g. Christmas day, time spent with a friend, a vacation, a place where you can be alone.

Imagine how you felt when you were in another time and place. Think about how it smelled, the sounds that were present, the feeling you had about the event, whether it was cold or warm, who was there, what was taking place in your life at that time, the words that you heard from others.

Allow yourself time to listen to the entire exercise and enough time to appreciate what you learned.

After you select certain feeling or event, practice recreating at other times when you are not listening to the tape.

Be aware of body contact with the chair you are sitting in or where your feet touch the floor. Try to feel what is beneath you.

When you feel yourself becoming tense, take a deep breath and hold it until you feel the tension in your chest. Try to hold it a moment longer and then expel the air. Notice how much relief you felt from letting that air out. Do it again and this time allow the tension in your body to flow out with your breath. This will take practice but it is an excellent way to do a quick relaxation anytime, anywhere.

Place an object in your work setting that will remind you that “special place” you imagine while doing your relaxation. Seeing the object will remind you and help you to take just a moment to do a very brief deep breathing exercise.

Music can be helpful in relaxation. While driving it is helpful to listen to relaxing music. At home take a few moments to sit down and listen to your favorite piece for five minutes.

Be aware of the tension in your face. Ask yourself if you are gritting your teeth and if your forehead is smooth. Make sure your lips are soft and hardly touching.

Notice your hands. Are you holding them tightly together or are they limp and soft? Are your wrists limp, or are you holding them stiffly?

Good posture is important. If your body is supporting the weight evenly there will be less stress on certain parts of your body. Sit straight up in your chair, allowing the chair to support you. Let your neck support the weight of your head by holding your head up. Keep your feet flat on the floor.

When you are thinking of several different issues at the same time, write down all that you are trying to remember. If it is written down you will not forget about it, and you can relax for a time before working through your list. This is especially helpful at night when you are trying to get to sleep.

# Chapter 15

## EXERCISE Exercise

*Please obtain your doctor's approval for all exercises before you begin!*

### Why Stretch

Chronic people with pain need to stretch a little each day. As your muscles stretch, your muscle tone improves and decreases pain. Not only is a well-stretched muscle less likely to be injured, it will also cause less pain.

Note these important pointers:

1. Stretch only until you feel a gentle pull in your muscles. These muscles have been inactive and it will take some time before you can accomplish a full stretch.
2. Start out slowly and increase your stretching each day.
3. Inhale as you begin to stretch, slowly exhale as you follow through with the stretch. This will help you to remain relaxed and will decrease your chance of injury.
4. Exercise at the same time of the day. This facilitates developing a routine that will be easy to follow.
5. Select slow rhythmic music that you enjoy. Use this music to help you through your daily exercise program.
6. Become aware of each part of your body as you stretch and notice where more attention is needed.

### **Facts about a stretching program:**

1. You will obtain increased mobility through stretching.
2. Stretching promotes circulation, which in turn creates healthier muscles and speeds up the healing process.
3. Stretching is something you do for yourself, demonstrating belief in your ability to take control of your body and be responsible for your recovery.

The following exercises are suggested to help you regain mobility as well as your self-esteem. If you already have your own exercise program, please continue it. Remember to begin slowly. Do not expect to do the entire series the first time. Start out with one or two if you wish. Do what you can, recognize your limitations, and be realistic about exercise. You may not have used a number of your muscles in a very long time and may experience soreness at first. That's okay. Just stretch until you feel it in your muscles. If you only get a leg off the ground two inches, that's okay. Work at improving your range of movement. In time you will be pleasantly surprised at just how your mobility improves.

**Remember, the better your muscle tone is, the less pain you experience. One step at a time.**

## **Stretches:**

1. Buttock lift: Lie flat on your back with your arms down at your sides, bend your legs, and place your feet flat on the floor. Lift your buttocks off the floor and hold for a count of five.
  
2. Sit-ups: Lie flat on your back with your knees bent, feet flat on the floor, arms extended above your head. Breathe in and try to sit up. You may only be able to lift your head off the floor, but in time you will be able to get up further. Hold yourself up for a count of five and return to the floor.
  
3. Leg tucks: Lying flat on your back with your arms at your sides and your legs extended, bring your right leg up toward your chest. Hold your leg with your arms and pull your leg in toward your chest. Hold for a count of five and return your right leg to the floor. Repeat with your left leg and then repeat once more, this time with both legs together.
  
4. Leg lifts: Lie flat on your back with your right leg extended and your left leg bent at the knee with your foot flat on the floor. Keep your right leg straight and raise it off the floor as far as you can. Hold this for a count of five and return your leg to the floor. Reverse and repeat with your left leg.

5. Side leg lifts: Lie on your right side with your right leg slightly bent and raise your left leg off the floor as far as you can. Hold for a count of five and return to the floor. Do this ten times and repeat with your right leg.

6. Stomach leg lifts: Lie on your stomach with your legs extended and your arms bent, placing your hands under your chin. Slowly lift your right leg off the floor as far as you can, just until you feel the stretch in your leg muscles. Hold for a count of five and then lower your leg. Do this ten times and then repeat with your left leg.

7. Neck rotations: Sit up with your back straight and your legs folded in Indian fashion and allow your arms to fall naturally to your sides. Look straight ahead, then slowly turn your head from right to left, keeping a slow, even motion. Do this five times.

8. Butterfly: Sit up with your knees bent and the soles of your feet together, holding your feet in place with your hands. Pull your knees up toward each

other slowly. Once you have pulled your knees up as far as possible, let them slowly fall back to the floor.

9. Leg extension: Sit on the floor with one leg extended in front of you while the other leg is bent with toe pointing towards the opposite leg. With both arms together, reach toward your extended leg. Reach just until you feel a comfortable stretch. Reverse legs and repeat. Do this ten times on each side.

10. Sitting three point toe touch: Remaining on the floor, spread both your legs out in front of you. With both hands together, reach for your right foot, then in front of you, then for your left foot. Repeat this ten times.

11. Toe touches: Sitting on the floor with both legs together and extended in front of you, bend at your hips, trying to keep your back straight and your head up. Try not to bend your lower back. Reach for the lower part of your legs. Hold for a count of five and return to your starting position. Repeat ten times.

12. Arms swirls: Stand up with your arms extended from your shoulders. In an even motion, swing your arms from side to side, twisting at the waist. Try to remain relaxed as you do this to get a smooth even motion.

13. Arm circles: Stand with your arms extended out from your shoulders, and move your arms forward in a circular motion. Make small circles as you move your arms forward in a circular motion. Repeat this ten times and then reverse the direction.

14. Windmills: Stand up straight with your arms extended at your sides. Bend down and with your right hand touch your left toe. Stand back up and start again with the opposite hand and toe. Do ten repetitions of this.

15. Standing side bends: Stand up straight with your arms extended at your sides. Bend toward your right side, letting your right arm go down your side, and touch your right leg at the knee or as far as you can go. Do this just until you begin to feel the stretch in your left side. Reverse and do the other side.
  
16. Side bends: This is essentially the same exercise as #15, but this time put your hands over your head and hold your arms together by gripping your elbows with your hands. Do this ten times.
  
17. Three point toe touch: Stand straight with your arms at your sides and your legs slightly spread apart. Bend down so your hands are reaching for your toes. Now, without coming up, reach further toward your body. And once more reach back to your toes. Your hands do not have to touch the floor. Do this ten times.

18. Lower leg stretches: Stand facing a wall. Put your feet about a foot away from the wall with your hands supporting your weight on the wall. Keep your heels flat on the floor and let your arms bend so that your body moves toward the wall without lifting your heels from the floor. Count to three and then push your body away from the wall. Repeat ten times.

## Daily Exercise Chart

### Example of First Week

Exercise

Number of repetitions

1. Leg Lifts		2	2	2	2	2	2	2
2. Arm circles		4	1	1	3	3	4	2
3. Leg Lifts (front)		1	1	1		2	2	2
4. Touching toes		2	2	2				
5. Walked (blocks)		½	½	⅓	1	1	1 ½	1 ½
		Mo n	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun

Comments: The first day I did the exercise I felt pretty good. However, the second day I was sore, mostly in my arms. I cut back on the arm circles that day. As I increased my walking around the block, I cut back on other things because I liked walking better than standing still and doing exercises. I think I will continue to do some stretches, they make me feel okay. But I will increase my walking.

### Daily Exercise Chart

**First Week**  
Exercise

Number of repetitions

1.									
2.									
3.									
4.									
5.									
			Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun

**Comments:**

### Daily Exercise Chart

Second Week  
Exercise

Number of repetitions

1.									
2.									
3.									
4.									
5.									

		Mo n	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
--	--	---------	------	-----	------	-----	-----	-----

**Comments:**

### Daily Exercise Chart

**Third Week**  
Exercise

**Number of repetitions**

1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								
		Mo n	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun

**Comments:**

**Fourth Week  
Exercise**

**Daily Exercise Chart**

**Number of repetitions**

<b>1.</b>								
<b>2.</b>								
<b>3.</b>								
<b>4.</b>								
<b>5.</b>								
		<b>Mo n</b>	<b>Tues</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>Thur</b>	<b>Fri</b>	<b>Sat</b>	<b>Sun</b>

Comments:

After three months, review your progress and answer the questions below.

1. Have you been faithful in doing your exercises?

2. If not, what prevented you from doing them? (other than pain)

3. Did you find it difficult doing them alone? If so, did you find someone who was willing to exercise with you?

4. Did you continue to add an exercise to your routine each week?

5. How do you feel after completing three months of exercise?

6. Do you feel the exercises were useful to you? Why or why not?

7. How did your family view your exercise program? Were they supportive?

8. What suggestions would you have for someone just starting out in a similar program?

# Chapter 16

## SLEEP HYGIENE Sleep Hygiene

*Contributed by:*

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Insomnia, at some time or another, affects most of us. It is rarely a lasting problem, however, unless there is some medical or psychological condition that perpetuates it.

Some people complain that they almost never sleep. When they are studied in sleep laboratories with all-night brain wave recordings, it is found that they actually sleep most of the night. However, their deep, slow-wave sleep is "contaminated" with brain waves characteristic of wakefulness. Thus, their sleep isn't restful, and they are often aware of being awake during the night.

Brief problems with insomnia are characteristic of periods of stress, such as the night before a trip, an exam, or a major event at work. The problem is usually much longer-lasting after a move to a new location, a job change, or the loss of a loved one. Medical problems, such as heart failure or chronic pain, and psychological problems, such as depression and anxiety, often lead to chronic insomnia.

It is important to be aware that there is no particular amount of sleep which is correct for everyone. Many people feel good with only five or six hours per night, while others may require nine or ten. Those who sleep about seven hours per night seem to be the healthiest overall, but no one is sure just what this means. The message is that if you do not feel fatigued, you are probably getting plenty of sleep. The converse is not necessarily true; i.e., there are many reasons for feeling chronically tired, only one of which is insomnia.

Most people are surprised to learn that the medical treatment for sleep problems is not very good. The old "classical" sleeping pill, such as the barbiturates, chloral hydrates, Doriden, Quaalude, etc., have been proven to help only briefly. In regular use, they actually impair sleep to the point that after only two weeks of use a person's sleep will be worse than it was before he began taking it. The

research done with the benzodiazepine group of sleeping pills (Dalmane, Halcyon, Restoril, and their close relatives, Valium, Librium, Serax, etc.) indicates that they are useful for a longer period of time than the older drugs, but it is not known how long a person may use these before they, too, become ineffective.

A major problem with sedatives is that of "rebound insomnia." This term refers to the fact that when you stop taking the drug, your sleep doesn't revert to the way it was. Rather, there is a rebound effect, in which sleep may be very impaired due to having stopped the drug. This is commonly seen in those who consume alcohol heavily in the evenings. They may go to sleep without difficulty but then awaken frequently during the night; and, if they attempt to stop drinking, they may be unable to sleep at all for several nights.

Most sedatives also suppress dreaming. You dream about every 90 minutes of the night, although you may not remember the dreams. When dreaming (so called REM sleep) has been suppressed by medications, and the drugs are then stopped, there is also a rebound of dreaming, which often takes the form of nightmares.

Because of these factors, drugs are usually not the best solution to the problem of insomnia. There are, however, a number of things that you can do to improve your sleep:

1. **Exercise:** Vigorous physical exercise in the afternoon or early evening (NOT close to bedtime) has been shown to increase the portion of time spent in the deepest stages of sleep. So you may not sleep more, but you will probably sleep better if you exercise.
  2. **Schedule:** It is important to set the same time for bed every night and stick to it rigidly. It may help to prepare yourself for bed with a bedtime ritual, such as a bath, a glass of milk, etc. at the same time each night. Then you should set a wake-up time and stick to this, no matter how little you have slept the night before. It's very tempting to "sleep in" when you've been awake half the night before, but this only increases the chances that you won't sleep well the following night.
  3. **Naps:** Usually naps increase the problem of insomnia. They should generally be avoided by those with insomnia until their sleep has become regulated. On the other hand, a 20-minute period of napping, meditation, relaxation exercises, etc. can help to reduce the tensions of the day for many and can enable them to resume tasks with renewed energy.
  4. **Stimulants:** No coffee or tea after dinner. Also, until you're sure you are not affected by them, avoid chocolate (caffeine), decongestants, etc., in the evening.
1. **Don't Fight It:** Many people drive themselves into a near frenzy rolling and tossing all night in a futile effort to force themselves to sleep. Make a rule for yourself that if you aren't asleep after 15 minutes, leave the room and do something restful. Knitting is good, as are such things as jigsaw puzzles, quiet radio shows, etc. but they should not be done in the bedroom. Mystery shows, Hitchcock stories, etc. are off limits. Not only do they cause adrenalin to flow, but they're hard to leave. When you begin to feel drowsy (no human is capable of staying awake forever) then return to bed. If you're still awake in 15 minutes, leave the room again.
  2. **Bedrooms Are for Sleeping:** And loving. Nothing else. Using the room for paying bills, doing homework, arguing, etc., can prevent the room from being a comfortable refuge in which you can automatically relax.

3. **Avoid Habituation Drugs:** Avoid drugs such as tranquilizers, and sleeping pills. Most people who have used these drugs for a period of time and in substantial amounts find that it takes as long as six months for their sleep to fully normalize.

# Chapter 17

## NUTRIENTS AND YOU Nutrients and You

by Darnan Lan, M.S., R.D.  
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All of us want good health, and good nutrition is essential to good health. An adequate diet provides all the necessary nutrients in sufficient amounts to meet daily needs. Approximately fifty required nutrients work together to build and maintain the cells, regulate body processes, and supply energy. The six classes of nutrients are protein, carbohydrates, fats, minerals, vitamins, and water. Most foods contain more than one nutrient, but no single food supplies all of the essential nutrients the body requires. Eating a variety of foods will supply sufficient nutrients to maintain good health.

The characteristics of the six classes of nutrients are as follows:

1. **Carbohydrates** provide approximately 50% to 60% of the total calories in a well-balanced diet. Each gram of carbohydrate supplies about four calories, and carbohydrates are the body's chief source of energy.

Simple carbohydrates are easily digested and provide quick energy. Food sources for simple carbohydrates include cane sugar and honey.

Complex carbohydrates are digested with varying degrees of completeness and provide energy more slowly than simple carbohydrates. Some food sources are cereal, grains, peas and beans.

2. **Protein** is present in every body cell. The main function of protein is to supply antibodies to fight off infections, to build and repair body tissues, and to provide energy. Each gram of protein supplies about four calories. Protein will supply energy when the carbohydrates and fat content of the diet are insufficient to meet the body's needs. Some food sources are meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy products, dried beans, and peas.

3. **Fat** supplies the most concentrated form of energy in food. Fat protects the body against low temperatures and damage to vital organs. Each gram of fat supplies about nine calories and provides and carries fat soluble vitamins (A, D, E, and K). In addition, fat is the source of the essential fatty acids. Some food sources are oil, butter, lard, margarine, shortening, salad dressing, and bacon. Too much dietary fat provides excessive calories and is stored as adipose tissue, causing increased body weight. Chronic over-ingestion can lead to obesity which is associated with hypertension, diabetes mellitus, and heart disease. Too much dietary saturated fat is associated with atherosclerosis, which contributes to heart attacks and strokes.

4. **Minerals** are inorganic elements and fulfill a variety of metabolic functions. About 4% of body weight consists of mineral elements. There are two groups of minerals:

Major minerals present in the human body in large amounts are calcium, phosphorus, sodium, potassium, chloride, sulfur, and magnesium. They make up 60% to 80% of all inorganic minerals in the body.

Trace minerals present in the body in minute quantities include fluoride, iron, zinc, iodine, and copper. They make up about 1% of all inorganic minerals in the body.

5. **Vitamins** are organic, noncaloric substances necessary for growth and the maintenance of life. Vitamins are carried in the blood stream to all parts of the body, but must be provided by the diet since we are not able to manufacture them internally. Vitamins may be fat or water soluble, and their solubility affects absorption and transportation to target tissues. Extra amounts of fat soluble vitamins (A, D, E, and K) are stored in body tissue and may eventually be toxic, especially vitamins A and D. Excessive amounts of the water-soluble vitamins are not used metabolically and are readily excreted in the urine.

6. **Water** makes up 50% to 60% of the weight and is present in all body cells and fluids. Water is essential for nutrient transport and transfer to cells, for blood circulation, control of body temperature, excretion of body wastes, and for maintenance of electrolyte balance.

### **What Is Energy?**

Energy is obtained from protein, carbohydrates, and fat in food and is required for all body processes, such as maintenance of body temperature, metabolic and physical activities, and growth. The energy provided by foods is measured in kilocalorie (Kcal) and when energy intake is greater than energy expenditure, the result is increased body weight.

Whether you're trying to lose weight or maintain your present weight, exercise can be important with respect to your goal.

Foods eaten supply energy in the form of calories. Exercises can help in burning up these calories to offer one of the following three results:

Weight = Maintenance	Energy Expenditure	=	Calorie Intake
Weight = Gain	Energy Expenditure	<	Calorie Intake
Weight = Loss	Energy Expenditure	>	Calorie Intake

### **Basic Four Food Groups**

There are four basic foods groups designed to help us plan a well balanced diet. Foods with similar nutrient content and origin are grouped together, and it is the total daily food intake that is important. Each meal does not need to include foods from each food group. The four groups are milk, meat, fruit-vegetables, and grain. The following table shows the main nutrients, foods, and the recommended number of servings from each of the food groups.

<b>Food Group</b>		2/adults	Protein
	1 cup (8 oz)		Iron
—	1 cup		Niacin
<u>Milk</u>	1 1/4 cup	2 servings	Thiamine (B1)
plain yogurt			
cheddar cheese			
cottage cheese	2 oz cooked		
	2 oz cooked		
<u>Meat</u>	2 oz cooked		
lean	2		
fish	1/2 cup		Vitamins
poultry	1 cup		Minerals
eggs	1/4 cup		Fiber
cottage cheese			
dry beans, peas		4 servings	
peanut butter			
<u>Fruit</u>	1 med.		
<u>Vegetables</u>	1 med.		Carbohydrates
apples	1 cup		Thiamine (B1)
bananas			Niacin
vegs. raw			Iron
vegs. cooked			Fiber
or juice	1 slice	4 servings	Riboflavin (B2)
<u>Grain</u>	1/2 cup		
bread			Carbohydrates
ready-to-eat	1/2 cup		Fats
cereal			
cooked cereal			
pasta cooked			
or rice cooked	amounts are determined by individual calorie needs		
<u>Other</u>			
including			
sugar,			
sweets,			
fats			
		<b>Main nutrients</b>	
	<b>Serving(s) per day</b>	Calcium	
		Riboflavin (B2)	
		Protein	
		Phosphorus	
<b>Amount per serving (adult)</b>	3/children		
	4/teenagers		

## Dietary Guidelines for Americans

Many Americans consume excess calories, saturated fat, cholesterol, sugar, and salt. These dietary habits contribute to cardiovascular disease, diabetes mellitus, and hypertension. The dietary guidelines emphasize preventive nutrition and are geared to promote good health. Food alone cannot make you healthy, but good eating habits based on moderation and variety can help you to maintain health.

The dietary guidelines for Americans are as follows:

1. Eat a variety of foods. Include these foods daily: milk, meat, fruit and vegetables, and grains.
2. Maintain ideal body weight. Increase physical activity, reduce fatty foods and sweets, drink less alcohol, and lose weight gradually. To determine ideal body weight follow this guide:

Women - 100 pounds for the first five feet and five pounds for each inch above.

Men - 106 pounds for the first five feet and six pounds for each inch above.

Example: 5'5" female: 100 lbs. + 25 lbs = 125 lbs

5'5" male: 106 lbs + 30 lbs = 136 lbs

These guidelines are for a medium frame. Decrease 10% for a small frame and increase 10% for a large frame.

1. Avoid too much fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol.
  - a. choose lean meat, fish, poultry, and skim milk as protein sources
  - b. trim fat off meat
  - c. use eggs and organ meats in moderation
  - d. limit fat and oil intake, especially those products high in saturated fat and cholesterol, such as butter, cream, lard, coconut oil, and palm oil
  - e. read labels for fat content

2. Eat food with adequate starch and fiber. Simple carbohydrates such as sugars provide only calories and no other nutrients. Complex carbohydrates such as starches provide calories and many essential nutrients. Increasing complex carbohydrate intake also increases dietary fiber content. Eating food high in fiber has been found to reduce symptoms of chronic constipation, diverticular disease, and some types of irritable bowel syndrome. A diet low in fiber may increase the risk of developing colon cancer.

a.

Substitute starches for fats and sugars.

b.

Select whole-grain bread and cereal, fruits, and vegetables, dried beans and peas, and nuts to increase fiber and starch intake.

c.

Avoid too much sugar. A significant health problem that results from eating too much sugar is tooth decay and the risk increases with increased frequency of consumption.

d.

Foods high in sugar include syrup, honey, jams, jellies, candies, soft drinks, and pies and cakes.

e.

Select fresh fruit or fruits canned in their own juices or light syrups.

f.

Use less sugar and foods containing large amounts of sugar.

g.

Read can labels to help determine sugar content.

3. Avoid too much sodium. Table salt contains sodium and chloride and both are essential in the diet. But a major health hazard that results from excess sodium intake is high blood pressure, and reduced dietary sodium may help to decrease elevated blood pressure. Sodium is present in many foods and beverages, especially pickled foods, salty snacks, and luncheon meats. Salt is often used in the preservation of certain foods. Baking soda, baking powder, monosodium glutamate (MSG), and even many medications contain sodium.

a.

Limit salty foods.

b.

Try preparing foods with spices and herbs.

c.

Cook without salt or use very little in cooking.

d.

Read food labels for sodium content.

4. If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation. Alcoholic beverages are high in calories (about seven calories per gram) and low in nutrients. Nutritional deficiencies are common among heavy drinkers, because they lose their appetite which results in poor food intake. In addition, these people suffer impaired nutrient absorption. Use of alcoholic beverages during pregnancy can result in birth defects and mental retardation. One or two drinks per day appear to cause no harm in normal healthy, nonpregnant adults.



2. Did you skip meals? Why?

3. What was lacking in your diet?

4. What meal can you improve on to ensure that you are getting the daily nutritional requirements?

5. What foods do you need more of in your diet?

6. What foods can you cut back on in your diet?

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# Chapter 18

## HELPFUL HINTS FOR EVERYDAY LIVING **Helpful Hints for Everyday Living**

Chronic pain creates many types of problems unique to those who must deal with pain on a daily basis. It is important that people with chronic pain begin to realize that they can still do many things, they just need to approach them in a different manner. This section is designed to give you helpful hints on alternative ways to approach daily activities which you may have considered impossible to do. Remember, *anything is possible* if you choose to do it and if you have the knowledge to try.

Let's start with problems that occur in the morning. The first problem is getting out of bed. Many person with pain experience a great deal of stiffness after lying in bed. They find it difficult to get moving without experiencing a great deal of pain. Here are some hints you might want to try.

### **Getting out of Bed**

1. Before getting out of bed in the morning, try doing a few simple stretches. This will begin to loosen up stiff muscles as well as get the blood circulating.
  - a. While lying flat on your back, point your toes down away from your body. Hold for ten seconds and then bring your feet back toward your shoulders, toes extended upward.
  - b. Do the same thing with your hands. Point your fingers down, away from your body and then bring your hands back toward your shoulders, fingers extended upward.
  - c. Remain lying on your back and take in a deep breath: hold it for ten seconds and then slowly release the air from your lungs. Repeat this three times.
  - d. Bring your arms up over your head and extend them as far upward as you can. Stretch your arms as you hold for a count of five and then return to your side.

- e.  
Lying on your side, body outstretched, slowly bring your knees up toward your chest. Hold this position for ten seconds and then slowly return your body to a straight position.
2. Getting out of bed is often a problem in itself. Try these tips:
  - a.  
Slowly bring yourself to a sitting position on the edge of the bed. Sit there for a few moments before you stand up.
  - b.  
If you have difficulty sitting up, swing your legs out over the edge of the bed, allowing them to dangle. Then slide to the edge of the bed until your feet hit the floor. Slowly roll your body out of bed, allowing your feet to support your weight.
  - c.  
Place a chair, cane or walker beside your bed when you retire for the night. Upon awaking, use the chair to help you by putting your weight on the chair as you slowly get out of bed.
3. Once you are out of bed, do you feel it's necessary to make the bed before leaving the bedroom? Instead of making the bed immediately, allow yourself time in the morning to relax over a cup of coffee or tea without trying to accomplish anything but waking up in a leisurely way.

### **Making Breakfast**

1. Prepare your coffee the night before. Set up the coffee maker so that all you will have to do is plug it in.
2. If you find it difficult to prepare a large breakfast for your family, try some of the products on the market which are ready-made such as frozen French toast, pancakes, waffles, or instant cereal.
3. Give yourself enough time in the morning to eat breakfast. Good nutrition is important, and feeding your body in the morning is especially important.
4. Set time aside later in the day to do the breakfast dishes. There is no need to do them immediately.

### **Getting Dressed**

1. Sit on the edge of the bed to put on socks and pants.
2. If you have to stand to get certain items on, find a wall and rest your body against the wall to maintain balance and distribute your weight.
3. Have a place convenient to you where you can sit down and put on your make-up or shave.
4. When brushing your teeth, stand upright. Bending over the sink puts a great deal of pressure on your back.

### **Bed Making**

1. Instead of making a proper bed, just pull the covers up.
2. Don't feel that you have to make your bed every day. Just shut your bedroom door and you won't be reminded that your room is not as decorative as usual. You needn't be ashamed of an unmade bed; it doesn't say that you're lazy. Rather, it means that today you have other, higher priority, things to accomplish.
3. If you must make your bed, try to conserve your time and energy. As you get out of bed, toss the covers back up over the bed so they will be in position
4. Make one side of the bed, placing the pillow in position and the bedspread over the pillow before going to the other side of the bed. This will save steps walking from one side of the bed to the other.
5. When it is necessary to bend over to make the bed, don't bend at the waist but bend at the knees. This will take considerable strain off your back muscles.
6. Ask someone to help you make the bed. One of your basic rights is the right to ask for help or assistance.

### **Sleeping**

1. If you have back trouble, lie on your back and place a small pillow under your knees to take the pressure off your back.
2. If you sleep on your side, allow the leg touching the mattress to extend

up and slightly bend the other leg up toward your chest.

3. If you have neck problems, place a small pillow roll under your neck instead of using large bed pillows. This will keep your neck well positioned in relation to the rest of your spine.
4. Try to avoid sleeping on your stomach: it puts strain on your spine.

### **At Work**

1. If you have a job which requires you to sit all day, make sure your seat is the proper height from the floor and try to maintain good posture while sitting.
2. Do not sit hunched over your desk. It is important to keep your neck in alignment with your back.
3. It is helpful to place a small stool at the foot of your chair. When you are feeling back strain, place your feet on the stool to ease the strain.
4. Place your hands on the sides of your chair with your weight resting on your arms for a few minutes. This will take the pressure off your back.
5. If you must lift at the work place, make sure you bend from the knees and not your back. Bending at the knees puts most of the strain on your legs rather than your back.
6. If you must sit all day, take a few minutes each hour to stand up and walk around your desk.
7. Kneel with your knees bent rather than leaning forward from the back.
8. If you must stand over a work table all day, find a stool to sit on which will permit you to work at the same level as standing.
9. Standing with one leg raised slightly off the ground, resting on a ledge, will help take some strain off your back. Alternate legs when you tire of one position.
10. Make sure that your work table is at a level that will permit your arms to fall naturally on the top.

## **Cleaning the House**

1. Gently wheel your vacuum from the storage area, don't lift it.
2. Bend at your knees when you need to reach something on the floor.
3. When ironing, place your leg on a small stool several inches off the ground.
4. Sit whenever possible. You can load your dishwasher from a sitting position.
5. The entire house does not need to be cleaned in one day. Break the job into several days' work.
6. Store frequently used items at waist-high level.
7. Do only one thing at a time.
8. Make do with one trip up or down the steps. Avoid unlimited trips up and down the stairs.
9. Never run if you can walk. Take your time to do the work.
10. Place the laundry basket on a table next to the washing machine so you do not have to bend over to sort the clothes.
11. Put an extension on your duster so you do not have to strain to reach hard-to-get-at places.
12. Make housekeeping a family project and share the responsibility.

## **Working in the Kitchen**

1. Find out what devices are available to make your job easier. There are many time-saving devices as well as special items to help open jars and peel potatoes.
2. Scoop out your ice cream into individual scoops and place each scoop into a small plastic bag when you bring it home from the store, then refreeze. The ice cream is usually softer when it has been out of the freezer for a while.

3. When making cookies, only bake half the dough and freeze the rest for another time.
4. Open up the cupboard door below you and place one foot on the ledge to take strain off your back while standing.
5. Prepare double recipes for dinner on good days and freeze half for the days when you don't feel up to cooking.
6. Sit down to do tasks whenever possible.
7. Roll out pie crust on your counter, which is higher than your table.
8. Make sure you set aside time to relax.

### **Grocery Shopping**

1. Have the bagger distribute the weight of heavy items so that no bag is too heavy.
2. Carry bags close to the body.
3. Avoid plastic shopping bags which will put strain on your back and arms.
4. Make frequent trips to the store to avoid heavy packages.
5. Avoid placing grocery bags in the back seat of your car. Put them in the trunk. The bags are too difficult to lift from that position.
6. Have a list of needed items in the order they appear in your local store to avoid extra steps for forgotten items.

### **Driving**

1. Make sure your seat is in the proper position. Adjust your seat so that it is comfortable for your legs to reach the pedals. Your head should be gently balanced on the top of your spine.
2. Place a small pillow roll in the small of your back to give added support to your back.

3. If you are going to be driving for a long period of time, allow enough time for frequent stops to stretch.

### **Recreation Time**

1. When you plan a vacation, make sure you allow enough time to rest if it is to be a long trip.
  2. If traveling by car, lie down in the back seat if you get tired.
  3. When dining out, wear comfortable clothes and maintain good posture.
  4. Take a pillow to support your back if you go to the movies.
1. Entertaining should be planned well enough in advance so that you do not do all your chores in one day. Break your chores up over several days and make food that is easy to prepare and serve.
  2. Allowing time to sit down and relax for a few minutes every so often can increase the time you feel that you are able to shop.
  3. Build up your tolerance over time so you can pursue hobbies such as wood working, sewing, gardening, and even sports.

**Anything is possible when you recognize your  
and maintain a positive attitude.**

# Chapter 19

## Troubling QUESTIONS FOR THOSE WITH CHRONIC PAIN

### Questions for Those with Chronic Pain

You will find that you still have questions that we have not addressed in this manual. Let us take a few moments to answer a few of the most often asked questions.

- 1. What do I say when people ask me how I feel?**  
*Tell the truth. If you are not having a good day, simply say, "I have had better days." Try to avoid going into detail about your physical symptoms.*
- 2. What should I ask my doctor?**  
*It is important to have all your questions answered. The best way to do that is make a list of all the things you would like to know. Don't feel that your questions are dumb. Remember the only dumb question is the one you did not ask.*
- 3. Will I ever be able to go back to work?**  
*That depends on many factors. That's one question you'll have to ask your doctor. Just let him or her know that you do want to work and are willing gradually to get back to a regular schedule. If you're unable to return to your former work, think about retraining.*
- 4. How can I make my family understand my pain problem?**  
*You can't. Unless your family members also have chronic pain, they'll never be able to truly understand what you're experiencing. The best thing for you to do is let them know that you are working toward a solution and that you need their support and open communication with them.*
- 5. Should I go to a pain clinic?**  
*If you feel as if out of control or that the pain dominates your life, consider a multidisciplinary pain rehabilitation program. The ACPA can serve as*

*additional support. Discuss obtaining a referral with your primary care doctor.*

**6. How do I find a pain unit?**

*Unfortunately there is no comprehensive directory of pain units. It is best to contact all the health care facilities and rehabilitation centers and inquire if they have pain management programs. If they do, ask to have information sent. Once you have all the information, review each program to determine which one will meet your needs. If you have access to the Internet you can visit the American Pain Society web page for a listing of pain programs. That address is: [www.ampainsoc.org](http://www.ampainsoc.org). In addition, there is another web site with more information about available programs. You can visit the Case Management Resource Guide at: [www.cmrg.com/cmrg\\_cfmfiles/sm.cfm](http://www.cmrg.com/cmrg_cfmfiles/sm.cfm).*

If you have any other questions you would like to ask, please call the National Office ACPA office at (916) 632-0922. We are always ready to help you.

The ACPA encourages you to send comments you have about this manual. Is there something you needed to know that we did not cover? Perhaps we did not go into enough detail on a certain section of this workbook and you would like more information. Please ask us. Just jot down your questions or comments and send them to:

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**Rocklin, CA 95677**  
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