

Pain

Living well with pain.

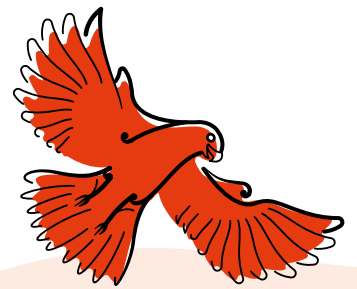
- ▶ Many people with ongoing health conditions have pain or discomfort.
- ▶ Pain lasting longer than 3 months is called chronic pain. If you experience chronic pain, you are not alone and there are things you can try that may help.

All of us know what pain is, but knowing what type of pain you have will help you know what to do about it.

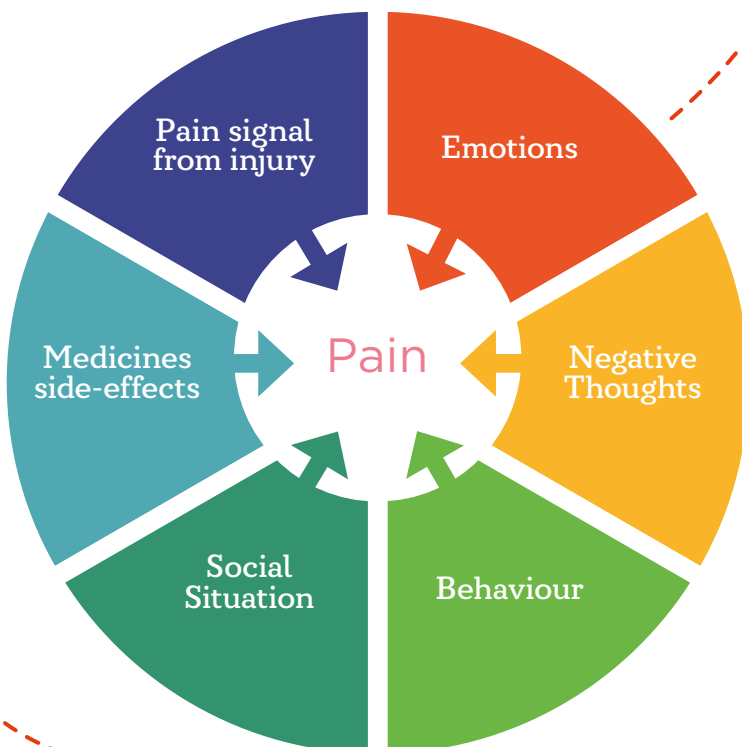
Acute pain comes on suddenly and is usually caused by something like a burn, cut or bee sting.

Chronic or persistent pain is ongoing and doesn't go away when you think it should. Examples of chronic pain are lower back pain, arthritis pain and pain that accompanies some conditions such as fibromyalgia.

Living with chronic pain can be hard work, but the good news is there are lots of things you can do to help yourself feel better.



Things that can make pain better or worse



Things you can do

Be more active and do some exercise – exercise is for everyone and is very important for people living with pain.

Some people living with pain are afraid of doing exercise and don't know where to start. Stretching and walking are good things to try. Start slowly and pace yourself. Ask your doctor or a physiotherapist which exercise is right for you.

Be social – connect with whānau, friends, community. Try joining a new group or start doing something you used to enjoy. Catch up with people as much as possible, talking, laughing – it really is the best medicine.

More tips for managing chronic pain

Ideas other people have found useful:

- 1 Stay active and pace yourself.
- 2 Be social and develop your support network.
- 3 Eat well and get enough sleep.
- 4 Distract yourself and practise being mindful.
- 5 Reduce stress by learning to relax and doing breathing exercises.
- 6 Physiotherapy, acupuncture, or massage therapy.
- 7 Using extra medicines for acute pain and flareups if advised by your doctor.
- 8 Doing a pain self-management programme, online or in-person.
- 9 Counselling.
- 10 Learning about how to manage pain from books, apps and videos.

About medicines

Medicines are a useful option for treating short-term (acute pain). They are not very effective in treating chronic pain.

When medicines are used long-term, they can have more side effects. Ask your doctor about how to use pain medicines.

Book recommendation:
Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Pain, by Sandra LeFort, et al. Bull Publishing, 2015.



For book recommendations, apps, videos and other support tools, visit: hn.org.nz/kete/resources