

Pain relief treatments

Treatments for pain relief

People often take medicine to help their pain. Here is some information about the most common types of medications and also other ways that people have found helpful to manage pain.

It is important to be realistic though, as these treatments rarely provide a magic cure. **It is what you do for yourself in getting you moving again and getting active that matters most.**

Painkillers

You can buy some painkillers, such as paracetamol, in a pharmacy. Paracetamol is safe if you follow the directions on the package. If you are on other medications too, the pharmacist can advise you on what it is best for you to take. Stronger painkillers, such as codeine, can cause nausea, vomiting, drowsiness and constipation. If you take drugs like codeine regularly, you're likely to begin needing them in order to feel well (you get dependent on them). This means that if you stop taking them, you get withdrawal symptoms.

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)

Drugs such as Ibuprofen, help pain and reduce inflammation of sore tissue. You can get stomach pains, diarrhoea, skin rashes, headaches and dizziness if you take NSAIDs.

Muscle relaxants

Drugs that relax your muscles also make you calm and sleepy. They include drugs such as diazepam (brand name Valium). Muscle relaxants can make you feel sick, dizzy or drowsy. It's possible to become dependent on these drugs if you take them for too long.

'Hot and cold'

This can be used for short term pain relief. In the first 48 hours a cold pack placed on the sore area for 5 to 10 minutes at a time can be helpful. Some people prefer heat such as a wheat pack that can be warmed in the microwave, or a hot water bottle.

Manipulation or mobilisation

This may help if done by a qualified professional such as a Chartered Physiotherapist. You should feel the benefit quickly. There is no value in treatment for months on end. Manipulation and mobilisation work best if combined with getting active

Other treatments

Massage, traction, electrotherapy, acupuncture and alternative medicine are used for back pain and whiplash. If the treatment eases your symptoms and allows you to exercise and move more freely then it is helpful.