



ACTIVEPHYSIO®

If it's not active it's not physio

PainSyndromes

PatientInformation



The condition

- Pain Syndromes

About the condition

Persistent pain is a symptom of a tired and unfit (or sensitised) Central Nervous System (CNS). The CNS is the battery which everything to do with your body and mind works from. The CNS is made up of your brain and all the nerves that come from it.

When your body sustains an injury, like a cut finger a fit CNS is alerted by the nerves in the region (in this instance, the nerves that supply your hand). The nerves react in direct proportion to the amount of chemicals that are released at the region of injury, which is in proportion to the amount of tissue damage. That means that if you prick your finger a certain amount of local chemicals are released but if you cut your finger off proportionally more chemicals are released at the site. The purpose of this is to alert your CNS how much damage has been done. The local nerves send messages all the way up to the brain, which then activates a proportional part to give you awareness that you have either had a minor injury or a major one.

In persistent pain syndromes, where the CNS has become unfit the CNS becomes overly sensitive (CNS Sensitisation) to the incoming messages that an "injury" is occurring. What should have made a small chemical change and therefore a small awareness of a minor pain becomes a small chemical release at the site but is amplified into a large event of pain by the CNS. The pain is real because the chemical amplification is real. Pain at rest is a symptom that the CNS is so ready to receive an "injury" message that it doesn't even require an "injury" message to be transmitted for it to tell you that you have a pain from it.

The presence of pain for a period of 12 weeks or more triggers this amplified reaction of the CNS but requires other factors to precipitate this problem. These factors relate to lifestyle and include:

- Sleep disturbances and physical exhaustion
- Low levels of cardio-vascular fitness
- Ineffective stress management
- A previous serious illness or injury

Usual symptoms include

- Resting pain at the site of injury
- Pain in other areas of the body
- A flare up of an old injury that had previously settled
- High levels of pain with relatively low levels of activity
- Sleep disturbances
- Anxiety and a feeling of always being "tense"
- Tenderness to pressure in muscles all over your body
- Shallow breathing or breath holding.

What we can do to help

- Educate you about the problem so you understand how to manage it
- Increase your awareness of breathing and relaxation strategies
- Increase your cardio-vascular fitness
- Use acupuncture to improve relaxation and sleep quality
- Liaise with the GP to discuss options of types of drugs to enhance this process.
- Safely strengthen your body to improve its function.
- Refer you to other therapists who can help any stress management issue

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