

Learn Mind-Body Approaches

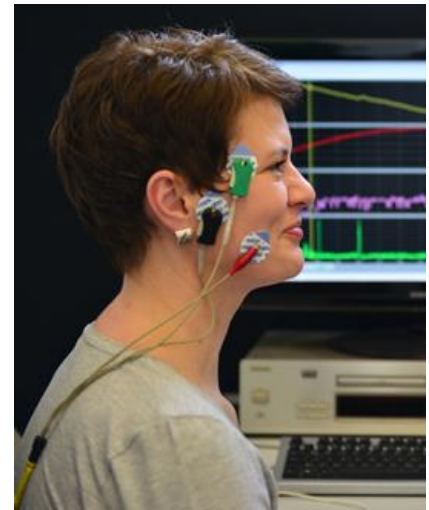
Every disease has an emotional component that aggravates and intensifies symptoms by its presence. Studies show that pain is always felt more strongly by an individual who is angry, fearful, depressed, or lonely. A low back pain in a woman suffering in an unhappy marriage will be more severe than in a woman who is at peace with herself and the world.

When pain intensifies due to emotion it by no means implies the individual is imagining or faking the pain. Emotions cause physiological changes in the body that amplify the pain signals going from your low back to your brain, where the experience of pain takes place

The brain is no longer seen as a passive receptor of pain and sensory information coming from peripheral nerve sites such as your low back, neck, leg, etc. How pain is expected, attended to, and interpreted by the brain influences the intensity of what is felt. Upsetting emotions such as anger, anxiety, or depression produce chemicals in the body which make it easier for you to receive and feel pain sensations. The more relaxed, optimistic, and peaceful you feel the less you will feel pain. The pain you feel, however, is real and there are always physiological mechanisms contributing to it, even when they do not show up on an x-ray or other diagnostic tests.

Mind-Body Treatments to help you manage pain could include:

- **Biofeedback** (muscle, brainwave, blood flow, pulse, sweat gland activity) to help you learn to relax, reduce muscular hyper bracing, quiet pain signals, improve mood and mind-body connections, and to enhance blood flow to painful areas of the body.
- **Individual or Family Therapy** to help you cope with family and friends' reactions to your pain, reduce depression and anxiety teach pain management, imagery techniques, and increase your activity level, recreation time and productivity.
- **Cognitive Skills Training** to help you once again become alert and enhance your concentration, memory, span of attention, and problem-solving abilities.



The above treatments are not meant to be a substitute for physical therapy, chiropractic care, acupuncture or medical management of your chronic pain. However, psychological treatment modalities will enhance the effectiveness of the above modalities and in many cases will make the difference between returning to a vital, meaningful life vs. remaining an anxious depressed individual living a lonely existence on the outskirts of society.

According to recent polls taken by the American Psychological Association:

- 93 percent of Americans say that perceptions, thoughts, and choices affect physical health
- 58 percent of Americans believe that one can't have good physical health without mental health
- More than 1/3 of all Americans say they have had an illness that was primarily caused by stress, yet 1/3 dealt with stress by overeating or drinking too much rather than seeking some form of counseling or mind/body treatment.