

Chronic Pain

“Your mind, emotions and body are instruments, and the way you align and tune them determines how well you play life.” – Harbhajan Singh Yogi

Pain, whether chronic or acute, affects people of all ages, social groups and ethnic backgrounds. One in four Americans suffer from pain that lasts longer than 24 hours. Your brain sends messages to let you know there is a threat. For example, when you touch something too hot, your hand receives a message that you burned yourself, and you move your hand away.

This mind-body connection ties the brain’s perception of pain to the injury or cause of the pain. How the mind perceives pain impacts our well-being and plays a role in healing. In other words, our minds can influence our pain levels. Your thoughts, feelings and attitudes can positively or negatively affect your body’s functions. Since our bodies are closely linked to our emotions, when we are stressed, anxious or upset, the body may develop pain or disease in an attempt to communicate that something is wrong. Conditions such as headache, lower back pain, neck pain and stiffness can be caused by emotional distress. The way you view stress and pain can be either helpful or unhelpful for your well-being.

Here are some tips:

- Express your thoughts.
- Talking about your feelings will help you release them. If this scares you, try writing them in a journal or on a scrap piece of paper. The important thing is to get your feelings out into the open.
- Move, gently.
- Spend time unwinding with gentle movement. Try a [10-minute yoga](#) video or [tai chi](#) to help control anxiety and pain.
- Try [progressive muscle relaxation](#).
- By tightening then relaxing your muscle groups, you can feel better physically and mentally.
- Take a breath. It helps relax your muscles.

Ask the Expert, Dec. 14 at noon

Join a 30-minute Ask the Expert session with Dr. Rachel Aaron, Assistant Professor, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, to discuss how psychology can help treat chronic pain.

Join from the Meeting link:

<https://lcah.webex.com/lcah/j.php?MTID=m9b6843ac6a5b60fdd3a605828417167f>

Join by meeting number: 2307 853 9207 Meeting Password: puF8YSvPe52

Join by phone 404-410-4502 Access code: 2307 853 9207

Lauren Littleton

Radiology Intern

The Johns Hopkins Hospital

“The Johns Hopkins Hospital I never learned how to cook. My parents never cooked and I had no one to learn from. When I moved to Baltimore, I started learning how to cook. This has greatly increased my mental health. Not only do I feel accomplished after cooking a good meal, I also feel better physically because the food is nutritious and healthy for my body.”

Share your story. [Click here](#) to submit.

Healthier Together

Get health and well-being tips on [JHM Link](#) and the [Healthy at Hopkins portal](#).

Click here for **more resources** from the Office of Well-being.

Invite a Healthy at Hopkins team member to your next staff meeting to lead a guided meditation or FitBreak. **Click here** to see the menu of offerings and to request an event.

Scan the QR code to download the Healthy at Hopkins App!

