

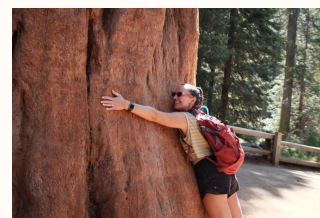


FREE RESOURCE · PAIN CARE

Moving Through Pain

Five simple, evidence-based tools for living better with long-lasting pain.

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Pain is real. When it lasts for months, your nervous system often becomes *over-protective* — like a smoke alarm that goes off when you make toast. Stress, poor sleep, and doing too much can turn up the alarm even after tissues have healed. The good news: the alarm can be gently retrained.

- 1 Pace yourself with the 80% rule**
Many people do too much on a good day, then pay for it with several days of pain. Instead, find how much of an activity you can do on a *harder* day without a flare — and do about 80% of that, every day. Add a little more each week (about 10%).
- 2 Keep moving, gently**
Movement helps most long-lasting pain. Start smaller than you think, stay below your flare point, and build slowly. Gentle yoga and walking are recommended first steps for back pain.
- 3 Calm the alarm with your breath**
Breathe in for 4, out for 6, for 5 minutes once or twice a day. Take 3 slow breaths before a task you're worried will hurt.
- 4 Protect your sleep**
Wake up at the same time each day and wind down for 30 minutes before bed. Poor sleep makes pain feel worse the next day.
- 5 Get one meaningful activity back**
Pick one thing pain has taken from you — gardening, a walk with a friend, cooking. Do a small, paced version of it. Feeling more capable often comes before feeling less pain.

Your flare-up plan

1. Remind yourself: *"This is a flare. Flares pass."*
2. Cut back to about half — don't stop completely.
3. Use comfort tools: heat or ice, slow breathing, gentle movement.
4. Return to your normal routine within a few days.

See a doctor promptly if pain comes with...

- Fever, unexplained weight loss, or night sweats
- New numbness between the legs, or bladder or bowel changes
- A recent fall or injury, or weakness that's getting worse

LEARN MORE

- **RetrainPain.org** — free, short pain-science lessons
- **TameTheBeast.org** — a 5-minute video on how pain works
- **Book:** *Explain Pain* — Butler & Moseley

KEY EVIDENCE

- Qaseem A, et al. *Ann Intern Med.* 2017;166:514–530 (low back pain guideline).
- Sherman KJ, et al. *Arch Intern Med.* 2011;171:2019–2026 (yoga for back pain).
- Louw A, et al. *Physiother Theory Pract.* 2016;32:332–355 (pain education).
- Finan PH, et al. *J Pain.* 2013;14:1539–1552 (sleep & pain).

Make it personal: take the free 60-second quiz or book a **free consultation** at wholelivingwithnikki.com — services are pay what you can.

Educational wellness information, not medical advice or treatment. Check with your care team before starting new activity. Stop if you feel pain, dizziness, chest pressure, or shortness of breath.