

6 Ways to Move Mindfully With Pain

When you are in pain, you might be reluctant to move. That's understandable. But being inactive may slow your body's healing. And staying active can help ease your pain. The key is to move *mindfully*. This means paying attention to how you move and how it makes your body feel.

1. Think of all the ways there are to move.

For the moment, it's vital to avoid heavy lifting and strenuous activity, as well as any movement that may cause sharp or intense pain. But there are still many ways you can move safely. You may want to consider the slow, flowing types of movement used in tai chi and yoga. Gentle stretching can also be helpful. Walking is another great option.

If you can't walk, chair exercises might be a good option for you. Many tai chi, yoga, and chair exercise classes are available free online.

2. Move without fear.

Remind yourself that being active can help ease pain. And it may help heal the source of your pain if your pain comes from an injury. That's because movement boosts blood flow. Being active can also boost your overall health and increase your sense of well-being. You may need to go slowly or change how you do certain things.

3. Recall how you have reacted when you've hurt parts of your body.

Did you stop moving completely for as long as it took to heal the injury? More likely, you continued to move but tried to avoid further harm. Do you think you could take a similar approach with the pain you have now?

4. Focus on what you *can* do.

Think of activities you can do rather than what you *cannot* do. Then do these things in a slow, thoughtful way.

5. Be aware and careful about how you move.

Don't rush. Look for chances to build awareness. If a certain activity or movement causes pain, think about how you can change the movement to lessen your pain.

6. Reassure yourself that hurt does not always mean harm.

If you feel a little sore or uncomfortable as you move, that doesn't mean you are doing more harm.

Mindful movement can help you keep moving even if you're hurting, and moving can in turn help ease your pain.

