

Will Power

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE PIONEERS ASSISTANCE FUND

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 5 • MAY 2015

PAIN: HOW MUCH IS MIND OVER MATTER?

Q: I take daily pain medication, but I worry about its side effects. Is it true I can meditate my pain away?

A: It is true that you can address some of your pain issues mentally. The mind-body connection is real. Pain affects the mind and the body.

The scientific community accepts the definition of pain as, “an unpleasant sensation that can range from mild, localized discomfort to agony” (International Association for the Study of Pain). Pain is also a subjective emotional reaction to the physical response of neurons to a stimulus. Example: You prick your finger, and keep sewing. You twist your ankle and cry in agony. You have arthritis pain in your joints but you have errands to run.

Some of us feel pain and push ahead with our day, while others feel pain and become debilitated. That is your mind’s ability and willingness to move past the pain.

Diagnosis & Treatment: Any pain that is severe or persistent, or resulting from an injury needs to be addressed by a doctor. Psychic pain, intense sadness, also must be

addressed by a mental health professional right away.

Finding Balance: If a doctor wants to prescribe a medication for pain, physical or emotional (analgesic or anti-depressant), talk to the doctor about the side effects, about how long you can go between doses, and breakthrough pain.

Alternative Treatments: Meditation has been shown to be effective for both emotional and physical pain. Exercise, too. Try also music therapy or art. Pain is unpleasant, so try to engage your mind in something that gives you pleasure.

Call one of our social workers today for a free guided meditation –all you need is an open mind and 15 minutes!

Sources:

“Arthritis and Pain. Psychosocial Aspects in The Management Of Arthritis Pain” by Catherine L Backman, Arthritis Research & Therapy 2006, 8:221 12/5/06.

Accessible here:
<http://arthritis-research.com/content/8/6/221>

“The impact of pain on psychological well-being in rheumatoid arthritis: the mediating effects of self-esteem and adjustment to disease” by Nagyova II, Stewart RE, Macejova Z, van Dijk JP, van den Heuvel WJ. Patient Educ Couns. 2005 Jul;58(1):55-62.

JOKE OF THE MONTH

Why did the monkey stop playing poker in the jungle?

- Too many cheetahs.

WILL CALL

Do you or someone you know need our assistance? Call toll-free (888) 994-3863 or wrpioneers.org





N.E.W.s

(N) Nutrition. (E) Exercise. (W) Wellness. Our theme for 2015, mindfulness, includes thinking about nutrition, exercise and wellness as a holistic approach to overall health. This month we look at exercise and mindfulness.

What is your idea of exercise? Some people walk. Others run. Some do yoga on a mat, and some from a chair. Tai Chi, dance, cycling, swimming, exercise class, group sports, they are all good, as long as you can do it.

Exercise that increases heartrate (safely) is good for your brain health as well as muscles. Science shows that exercise helps your brain function as well, possibly lowering the risk of dementia. But exercising at a slower pace is equally important. In middle and later ages, strength and balance are key exercise objectives. Both of these require engaging the brain during exercise. Tai Chi and yoga, for example, are slow, thoughtful movements that promote relaxation, flexibility and balance.

Mindful exercise means more than focusing on your movements. Mindfulness means gratitude. Thank your body for moving. Appreciate the exercise you are able to do and do not curse yourself for what you can't do. Mindful exercise is not a competitive mindset. It is open to the experience of movement. Does your left leg feel stronger than your right? Does your right arm stretch farther than the left. Try

not to have loud music or TV on during part of your workout. How is this exercise experience different from what you may have done before?

As they say in diet product ads, always let your doctor know before starting a new exercise regimen. The reason is to identify risk factors and develop a workout plan that is safe. Just moving your body is important, so do what you can, carefully and mindfully.

The Centers for Disease Control offers a suggested workout for seniors:

<http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/growingstronger/exercises/>

Sources:

"The Midlife Workout that Really Matters" By Elena Rover, available at <http://www.more.com/health/fitness/midlife-workout-really-matters-0>.

Physical exercise at midlife and risk of dementia three decades later: a population-based study of Swedish twins. by Andel R1, Crowe M, Pedersen NL, Fratiglioni L, Johansson B, Gatz M. J Gerontol A Biol Sci Med Sci. 2008 Jan; 63(1):62-6. Available at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18245762>.

“ QUOTE OF THE MONTH

What constitutes a life well spent? Love and admiration from your fellow men is all that anyone can ask. ~Will Rogers

