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This article is about pain ... physical pain. It's about how you can help your pain by practicing mindfulness.

And don't forget, last time we revealed our fabulous new premises. Click [here](#) to find out more.

MINDFULNESS AND PAIN

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Who likes feeling pain? For most of us, pain can be an unwelcome everyday occurrence. Chronic pain can be frustrating and debilitating. When we're in pain, we want it to go away ... immediately. And why wouldn't we? If I asked to you pay more attention to your pain, would you or could you? I'm sure the last thing you would want to do is pay *more* attention to it. But that's the premise behind mindfulness, a highly effective practice for chronic pain (among other concerns).

Mindfulness, according to one of the most popular teachers of mindfulness, Jon Kabat-Zinn, "means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally." Mindfulness teaches us to change our focus – from wanting the pain to stop, to being curious about our experience of pain and to not judge our pain. This is why mindfulness is so helpful for pain.

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Naturally, when we experience the psychological sensation of pain, our brains get loud – judging the pain, thinking negative thoughts about the pain – and this leads us to thinking more about the pain – how much we don't want it, how much we hate it, and how much we'd wish it would go away. These thoughts will only make our sensation of pain worse. To add further distress to our already loud experience of pain, our minds want to find a solution to the pain, so they try to problem solve. However this often only adds frustration, stress and disappointment, because by now there is generally nothing new that can ease our pain.

Mindfulness teaches us to interrupt these patterns and asks us to be curious about our experience of pain: instead of jumping to thoughts such as “This is awful” “This is horrible” “I don't want this”. It also teaches us to let go of our goals and expectations: rather than tightly holding to something that is going to provide some relief, and experiencing the inevitable disappointment of “Nothing ever works” “I'll never get rid of this pain”.

Mindfulness is about learning about the pain, noticing our experience of the pain, and being curious about it. We can often misinterpret our pain and believe that we are in pain 24/7; however by becoming curious and noticing our pain we often notice that it peaks at certain times, that it is more constant at others times, and that some times it isn't noticeable. By learning more about your pain you may release frustration, stress or disappointment related to your pain experience.

If you're struggling with chronic pain, you may want to connect with a practitioner who can teach you mindfulness strategies.

Remember that none of these techniques will be a 'quick fix' – they take time, and they take practice. However, often people will report that their ability to cope with pain improves which, in turn, improves their quality of life. They also report that it

also has the wonderful side benefit of alleviating much of the mental and emotional strain associated with chronic pain.

If you would like help in managing your chronic pain, please feel free to contact us on 0488 954 195, amanda@awakenpsychology.com.au or [click here](#)

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