

SOUTHPORT PHYSIOTHERAPY CENTRE

3E/34 High Street, Southport QLD 4215 P: (07) 5591 4333 E: southportphysio@gmail.com

DEALING WITH ARTHRITIC PAIN

What causes Arthritic pain?

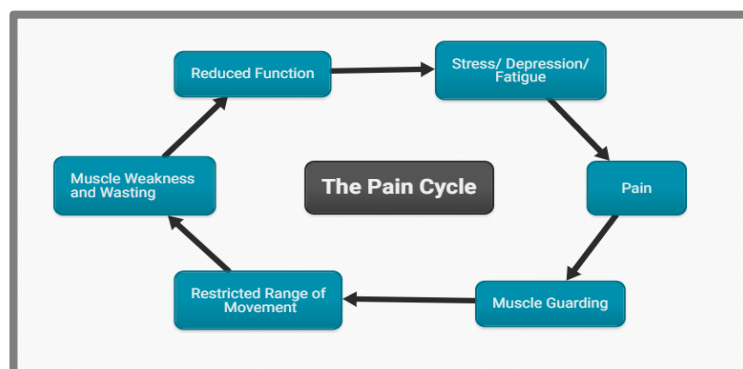
Arthritic pain can be caused by:

- Inflammation in the joint (which causes heat and swelling)
- Damage to the joint surface
- Muscle tension (which occurs from trying to protect the joints from painful movements)



The Pain Cycle:

The pain cycle is a continuous loop of negative issues that can develop when we sustain an injury.



Fortunately, the pain cycle can be broken by using certain strategies. However, what works for one person may not work for another. You may need to try several techniques until you find the one that works best for you.

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Some strategies for relieving Arthritic pain:

Take medication wisely

There are many medications on the market. Discuss with your GP or specialist to determine what will be the best option for you.



Exercise

Research strongly supports that regular appropriate exercise is effective for pain management. Keeping the joints moving and improving muscle strength can not only reduce pain but can help with alleviating stress and improving sleep pattern.



It doesn't really matter what you do, so long as it doesn't aggravate your pain. Go for a walk, ride a bike, swim or do some exercise in the gym.

Just do it- and do it regularly.



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Heat or Cold therapy.

Most people find heat to be more effective though some prefer cold therapy for relief. Regardless these treatments can be soothing and safe when used appropriately. At best they help and at worst they do nothing.



Take care of your joints.

Keeping moving doesn't mean pushing yourself to the limit. Avoid doing activities that you know will cause you a significant aggravation to your pain. Modify how you do certain things or when able ask for assistance. Some aids and supports can enable you to perform activities without flaring your symptoms.



Massage.

Massage is generally not thought to have much effect on arthritic pain. However, it has been useful in reducing muscle tension and improving relaxation.



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Acupuncture.

Acupuncture is the act of using needles in specific points of the body in order to block the perception of pain. There is mixed research that acupuncture is effective in managing arthritic pain however it can be useful in conjunction with other modalities.



TENS: transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation.

TENS machines apply mild electric pulses to block (or mask) pain messages from the painful area to the brain. In this way it is a pain masking device and can be effective when used appropriately. Your physiotherapist can provide education and training to best use a home TENS unit.



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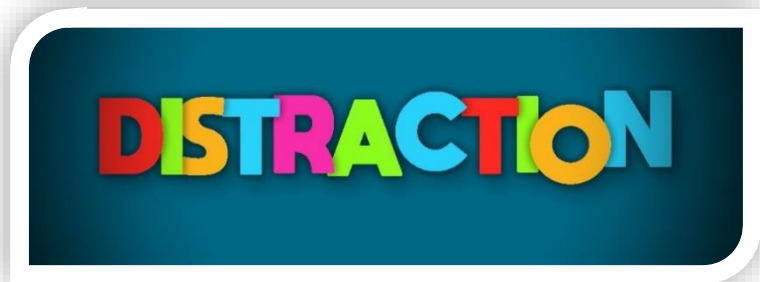
Relaxation.

Techniques such as deep breathing and visualisation (Mental pictures) can help to reduce stress and muscle tension. There are several different techniques, and you may need to practice and trial different methods to determine which is most effective for you.



Distraction.

Focussing your attention away from the pain can be a good coping technique. Some ways of taking your mind off the pain can be exercise, reading, listening to music or other activities to divert attention.



There may not be a cure for your pain, but you can learn different techniques to find what works best to manage your pain.