



# A New Simple Look at Managing Chronic Pain Naturally

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Pain is not just a negative four letter word. It is related to our body's sense of touch. The body's touch receptors are not only located in different areas of our skin, hair, and hands but deep inside to our joints. Therefore, we have a reflexive withdrawal of the hand from a fire. We also smile when someone rubs a relaxing hand on our shoulders additionally, when muscles are tight they may cause an aching in the joints. There are two main categories of pain, acute pain which last less than 3 months and results from an injury, surgery, illness or inflammation. Second, chronic pain, which is persistent, lasting longer than 3 months may be due to neurological, genetic, degenerative, emotional or chronic disease. Pain is a method of urgent communication between the mind and body.

My experience as a nurse, educator, researcher and massage therapist for over twenty years has led to understand that not all chronic pain is due to a medical condition that should be treated with conventional medicine because the body's method of communicating a need for some type of relief, change in posture, change in the physical environment, etc. For example, as a massage therapist I have worked with hundreds of people with chronic musculoskeletal pain. Believe it or not the pain was relieved with my advanced muscle release techniques and massage. It did not matter if they had pain for months or years once the right muscles were released the pain stopped. For example, I had a client who had carpal tunnel pain in her wrist for years but did not want surgery. I asked her to show me her sleeping position, you guessed it, her elbows and wrists were flexed (bent) and tucked under her chin as she slept on her side in fetal position nightly. She awoke each morning to tingling arms and hands. After massaging and releasing her muscles and she changed her sleeping posture, no more symptoms of carpal tunnel, no more pain, no need for surgery.

This is only one of the many examples I have for chronic pain being affected by changes in shoes, posture, repetitive motions, etc. Even though the levels of pain tolerance is both physiological and psychological, the body does help by producing pain relieving chemicals in the brain called endorphins, if a person with chronic pain can exercise, relax, and get enough sleep the person's endorphins will also increase. While this sounds like a good solution, it is actually a 'catch 22'. If the person has chronic joint pain and it hurts to walk, then exercise out of the question; trying to relax in spite of the pain isn't going to happen either and finally going to bed turns into a night of tossing and turning. No wonder people resort to pain medication.

My simple pain relieving technique is a natural and subconscious response to pain and that is rubbing or self-massage. For more information read, <https://www.amtamassage.org/research/Massage-Therapy-Research-Roundup/Research-Roundup--Massage-Therapy-for-Pain-Management.html>

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