Between 13% and 35% of Irish adults suffer from chronic pain, which is pain that lasts longer than three months. Chronic pain has a range of causes, making it a complex issue to tackle. It can also seriously affect people’s social and professional lives. The following tips may help you deal with your pain better.

**Diet**

Eating a healthy diet is important for overall health, but can also play a role in dealing with chronic pain. Try this A-B-C strategy:

- **Avoid alcohol**
  - Excessive alcohol drinking can make pain worse, as well as disturb sleep. It can also interfere with the body’s water balance, increase blood pressure, and damage the liver.

- **Boost hydration**
  - Dehydration has been linked to increased pain perceptions, but can also result in dizziness and fatigue. Avoid high levels of alcohol and exercise in hot climates to avoid dehydration.

- **Cut down on sugar**
  - High levels of processed sugar can exacerbate pain and mood.

**Exercise**

Doing appropriate exercises can have a positive effect on pain. It’s important to do the right exercises, and pace your exercise so you don’t exacerbate the problem.

- **Walking**
  - Walking is a good form of light aerobic exercise that can improve pain. Just 30 minutes of walking a day can improve overall health and reduce mortality risk.

- **Stretching**
  - Stretching helps increase flexibility and loosen tight muscles, and can relieve pain.

- **Yoga**
  - Types of yoga such as Hatha yoga have been shown to reduce pain. (Studies suggest that yoga may improve neurogenesis and help with pain modulation.)

**Mental wellbeing**

Chronic pain can affect people’s mental wellbeing. A recent survey found that 90% of people with chronic pain have avoided discussing pain with family and friends, leaving them feeling isolated and depressed.

- **Try meditation**
  - Mindfulness meditation has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety. It may help you deal better with pain.

- **Join a support group**
  - Joining a support group can provide social interaction, and support. As well as being enjoyable, it can help control the burnout and loneliness that can worsen pain suffering depression.

- **See your doctor**
  - If your healthcare professional has prescribed any medicines please follow the instructions and adhere to the patient information booklet accompanying the medicines.

**Monitor**

It’s important to keep a record of what you do, to see how it affects your pain level. This could be a diary, chart or online journal, which you can also share with your GP.

**Record your progress**

Keeping a diary can help you track what works and what doesn’t.

**References**

- Doing appropriate exercises can have a positive effect on pain. It’s important to do the right exercises, and pace your exercise so you don’t exacerbate the problem.
- Maintaining a regular exercise routine can help improve pain. Just 30 minutes of walking a day can improve overall health and reduce mortality risk.
- Avoid alcohol. Excessive alcohol drinking can make pain worse, as well as disturb sleep. It can also interfere with the body’s water balance, increase blood pressure, and damage the liver.
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**10 TIPS FOR**

**Patients Suffering from Chronic Pain**

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