

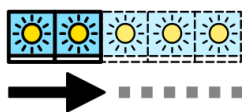
Pain Explained

What is Pain?

	<p>Pain is your brain's way of warning you of possible danger/threat.</p> <p>For a example, the pain you feel if you touch something very hot. This stops you from burning your hand.</p>
	<p>Acute pain is pain that lasts a short time, anything from a few seconds to 3 months usually.</p> <p>For example, if you sprain your ankle, the pain will stop you walking on it too much. This gives the ankle a chance to get better. When your ankle is better the pain will stop.</p>
	<p>Persistent pain (sometimes called chronic pain) is pain that continues beyond three months.</p> <p>The reasons we can get persistent pain are complicated. This leaflet will help to explain it.</p>
	<p>If you have persistent pain it does not always mean you have an injury or damage to your body.</p>
	<p>Persistent pain is caused by changes in the nervous system.</p>

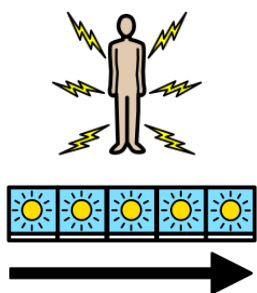


What happens when we feel acute pain?



	<p>Lets first look at what happens when we feel acute pain (pain that lasts less than three months).</p>
	<p>The nervous system is the main part of our body which leads us to feel pain.</p> <p>The nervous system includes the brain, spinal cord and nerves in our arms, legs and rest of our body.</p>
	<p>We have detectors at the ends of our nerves. These detect (notice) changes in the body.</p>
	<p>A signal is sent from the detector along the nerve and spinal cord to the brain. The signal tells the brain that there has been a change in the body. We call this a danger/threat message</p> <p>For example, if a brick falls on your foot the signal tells your brain that there has been a change in pressure.</p>
	<p>The brain makes sense of this information.</p> <p>To do this it also looks at other things, such as what is going on at the time, your thoughts, feelings and past experiences.</p> <p>These things influence how much pain you feel.</p>
	<p>If the brain decides there is possible danger/threat, you will feel pain. This will make you take action to keep you safe.</p>

What happens when we feel persistent pain?

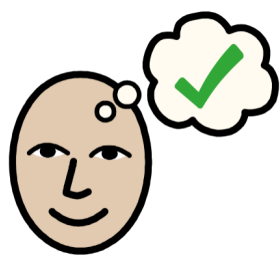


	<p>When an injury happens, your nervous system adapts (changes). This makes your body better at sending information to your brain. This is called sensitisation.</p>
	<p>Sensitisation happens in the nerves in your arms, legs and rest of the body, your spinal cord and your brain.</p>
	<p>The changes in your nervous system can mean more danger/threat messages are sent to the brain. You can then feel more pain.</p>
	<p>If your feeling stressed or low this can make you feel more pain.</p>
	<p>People who have persistent pain can have digestive problems, tense muscles, poor sleep and memory. This can leave you feeling exhausted and make the pain feel harder to cope with.</p>
	<p>Pain is very complicated and there are no quick fixes. Our service can show you ways to help you with your pain.</p>



The sensitised nervous system

	<p>When you have a sensitised nervous system you might feel more pain than you would have before.</p>
	<p>Other things that may happen:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pain spreads and gets worse 2. Movement can hurt 3. Pain can come on unexpectedly 4. Pain can make you feel stressed or low.
	<p>If you had an injury you can continue to feel pain after it has healed because of the sensitised nervous system.</p>
	<p>You can have a sensitised nervous system if there was no injury in the first place.</p>

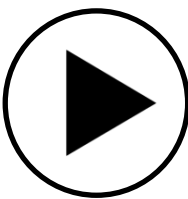





Keys facts about pain

	<p>Pain is always real.</p>
	<p>Pain does not always mean there is damage.</p>
	<p>Pain is your brain's way of protecting you from danger/threat.</p>
	<p>Your nervous system becomes sensitised. It does not switch off and keeps sending danger/threat messages to your brain.</p>
	<p>Lots of different things can affect if you feel pain and how bad it is.</p>
	<p>Persistent pain is caused by real processes in your body.</p>



Useful resources

	<p>Videos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainman, Understanding Pain in Five Minutes www.youtube.com/watch?v=5KrUL8tOaQs • Tame The Beast — It's time to rethink persistent pain: 5min www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikUzvSph7Z4 • The mysterious science of pain: www.youtube.com/watch?v=eakyDiXX6Uc
	<p>Websites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Retrain Pain Foundation: www.retrainpain.org/ • The Pain Toolkit www.paintoolkit.org/resources/for-patients
	<p>Books</p> <p>Painful Yarns: Metaphors and Stories to Help Understand the Biology of Pain by Lorimer Moseley</p>
	<p>Please also see our Persistent Pain Management website :</p> <p>www.solent.nhs.uk/msk/self-help/persistent-pain-management/</p>