



Monday through Friday

8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.

Saturdays & Holidays

9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

Sundays & Christmas

Noon to 4:00 P.M.

IT'S ABOUT THE PAIN

A monthly service of Kirkpatrick Family Care

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NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR PATIENTS WITH PAIN

Come January 1, every year, we make Resolutions to do or not to do, this or that. I've always wondered how long these plans last before lifelong patterns reassert themselves and we go back to our old ways. Well, regardless, here's a list for patients who have chronic pain.

- Take your medicine on schedule, according to your treatment plan. This is particularly important with long acting medications that provide a "foundation" for control of constant pain.
- Don't be tempted to give a pill to a friend in pain; it's a criminal offense because you are in effect "practicing medicine without a license."
- If you smoke, stop! Nicotine aggravates pain by constricting blood vessels and reducing the flow of oxygen to injured tissues.
- Lose weight if you are overweight, by dieting or exercising or both. Carrying extra weight aggravates skeletal injuries, for sure. Low starch diets work the best.
- Seek counseling if you are depressed. Or initiate or up-titrate your antidepressant (with approval of your doctor or midlevel). Depression aggravates pain and pain aggravates depression.
- Exercise. Not only does this increase endorphins and reduce pain, but it can create skeletal stability that reduces the risk of aggravating old injuries and suffering new ones.
- Consider the many non-medicinal treatments that may lessen pain and reduce your medication needs: including physical therapy, massage, heat/cold, relaxation training, TENS units (now over the counter), acupuncture, braces, and counseling.
- Also re-consider non-opioid medications like Tylenol, antidepressants, non-steroidals and topicals that might reduce the amount of opiate you need.
- Try reading "Managing Your Pain Before It Manages You." This book teaches you to think about the future, rather than dwelling on the past. It's not "what I've lost," but "what can I do."
- Try computer-based recreation. If you can no longer hunt, bowl, or travel, then try Wi-Fi bowling, video game hunting, and big screen travel movies and films that are set in international locations.
- Avoid concomitant use of alcohol or cannabis products. Interactions can be very harmful.
- Don't neglect your other health issues or your relationships with family and friends.
- Finally, do your part in preventing black market sales of opiates. Keep your medicine locked up so others—even friends, neighbors, and family—aren't tempted to steal pills and divert them. Discard/destroy medications no longer needed.