

Managing Pain

It is important that you keep your body moving to stop joints and ligaments feeling stiff and painful and muscles from losing strength.

Pain Medication (tablets)

Consider taking simple over the counter pain medications such as [ibuprofen](#) or [paracetamol](#) within the first few days to weeks of a new onset of symptoms, injury or both. Take the medication consistently as directed by the information on the box or medicine leaflet. This is the best way to stay safe and get the full benefit of over the counter pain medication. This can help you move more comfortably, which can help your recovery.

Topical Pain Creams

Pain creams can be a safe and beneficial addition to pain management strategies for some people. There are many products available. Consider speaking to your local pharmacist to discuss an appropriate medicated option for you. Consult with your GP practice or local pharmacist before combining pain medications (tablets) and medicated pain creams.

Speak to a pharmacist – If you experiencing side-effects or you can't take simple over the counter pain medications or they are not seeming to help, even though you have taken them regularly and consistently as the box and instructions describe, consult with your local pharmacist.

For further information on Pharmacy Services:

[Choose Pharmacy Leaflet \(wales.nhs.uk\)](#)
[NHS 111 Wales – Services near you](#)

In some cases, it may be necessary to consider prescribed pain medication. This should usually be after you have tried the simplest and safest options first, and only for the shortest required time. Consult with your local pharmacist or GP practice if you require more advice on prescribed pain medication.

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Hot/Cold

Some people report benefit from the use of hot or cold compression packs for short-term relief. There is no evidence that one is better than another, and it can come down to the person's preference. It is common to apply a cold pack after an injury or if symptoms are increased following activity or exercise. But this does not work for everyone. You can buy hot/cold packs from a pharmacy, or a hot water bottle or a bag of frozen vegetables wrapped in a cloth or towel will work just as well.

Movement & Exercise

An appropriate amount of movement and exercise has been shown to help manage pain. You may need to modify some movements and exercise dependent on your situation. For example, in the early days following a new onset of symptoms, injury or both you may want to practice the movements that feel more comfortable at first and gradually build up to normal movements. Go to our sections on [Activity and Exercise](#) for more information.

Mental Health & Stress

Periods of stress are an inevitable part of life. Stress does not just impact you emotionally but also physically and this can change how we feel and respond to pain. Pain in itself can be stressful which can lead to a vicious cycle. Mental Health and Stress management skills are important for managing pain. Some people find techniques such as relaxation, mindfulness meditation, exercise and talking to others helpful. Putting time aside for yourself to allow you to enjoy activities you find relaxing, such as having a warm bath or reading a good book, can be really beneficial. Go to our section on [Mental Health and Wellbeing](#) for more information.

Additional links and information can be found on our website:

MOVE BETTER GWENT – Managing Pain

https://movebettergwent.nhs.wales/self_management/managing-pain/

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