

Understanding Pain

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A pain flare-up is a worsening of the “condition that lasts from hours to weeks that is difficult to tolerate and generally impacts your usual activities and/or emotions”¹

Why does my pain flare up?

In some pain conditions, there are changes to the way the nervous system functions.

This is broadly known as **sensitisation and hypersensitivity**²

A flare-up can be triggered when the sensitisation or hypersensitivity are worse

It varies from person to person !!

It is common in people suffering from long term persistent pain !!

Pain is magnified through the brain !!

Pain is amplified through the body !!

Hypersensitivity

Being extra sensitive to sensations and find them painful, even though they are normally not painful



Worsened by:

- Poor sleep
- Poor management of stress or worry
- Poor fitness; sedentary lifestyle
- Poor diet
- Poor management of chronic diseases

Sensitisation

A painful sensation is amplified and feels much more painful than expected



Worsened by:

- Poor treatment of simple pains (ankle sprains etc.)
- Poor management of injuries
- Insufficient rest
- Overusing certain joints and muscles
- Tightness from old scars or injuries

Tackling Sensitivity-Excitability

1 Build up fitness and wellness

- Move better, Eat better
- Improve mindfulness, relaxation, worries and stress

3 Pace well

- Intersperse breaks throughout the day; little and often
- Be steady and progressive
- Know how much you can do and how much rest you need

2 Improve Sleep

- Sleep early
- Create routines

4 Consult your healthcare provider

- Solve the small pains to relieve the difficult pain

References:

[1] Costa, N., Ferreira, M. L., Setchell, J., Makovey, J., Dekroo, T., Downie, A., ... & Hodges, P. W. (2019). A definition of “flare” in low back pain: a multiphase process involving perspectives of individuals with low back pain and expert consensus. *The Journal of Pain*, 20(11), 1267-1275.

[2] Harte, S. E., Harris, R. E., & Clauw, D. J. (2018). The neurobiology of central sensitization. *Journal of Applied Biobehavioral Research*, 23(2), e12137.

Note:

This poster shares general tips and information for general awareness and educational purposes only. For advice specific to you, please speak with your healthcare provider.