



4 Ways To Manage The Emotional Stress Of Nerve Pain

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Living with nerve pain is not easy. If it has lasted a long time, you may have feelings of hopelessness, sadness, anger or even depression due to the constant pain. You may withdraw from people close to you or stop doing the fun things you used to do. If you have trouble coping with the emotions caused by your nerve pain, here are four suggestions for taking charge of those emotions and finding new perspectives. Your mind is a powerful thing — and you can use it to make a change in your life.

1. Practice self-care. Surround yourself with friends, family and people who give you support. Be open to activities you love and that bring you happiness. Explore activities that will stimulate you mentally, such as reading or puzzles. Try to keep a balance in your life and focus on yourself as a whole person – not just a painful foot, arm or leg.

2. Manage your stress. Pain is worse when you are stressed. To calm yourself, try a breathing exercise in which you breathe in through your nose for four counts, hold your breath for seven counts and exhale to the count of eight. Repeat that cycle four or five times.

Another technique that works well when you are at home or trying to go to sleep is progressive muscle relaxation. To do this, lie down in a dimly lit room and breathe in as you tighten a group of muscles and then breathe out as you release the tension. You can start at your feet and work up to your head or focus on big muscle groups first and then smaller ones. The result is that it relieves anxiety.

Yoga is another way to relieve stress and anxiety, as you focus on holding different poses. The stretching in yoga also helps to open up nerves and arteries to relieve pain. In addition, spiritual practices such as prayer and meditation can help to calm and ground you, providing relief from stress.

3. Talk about how you are feeling. Be open with the people you live with and others close to you. It's helpful for them to know how you are feeling, both physically and emotionally. Your family members can help you by listening and letting you vent when you are upset. They can provide hope and encourage you to keep up with your hobbies and interests. They may also be able to relate and provide ideas for coping. It can also be helpful to talk with a counselor who can provide you with objective, professional guidance on ways to cope with your physical pain.

4. Control what you can. Reducing the amounts of inflammatory foods you eat can help you feel better physically. Try decreasing sugar, dairy and gluten products to see if this improves how you feel both mentally and physically.

If your nerve pain affects your sleep, pay attention to small changes you can make. For example, if you have neuropathy in your feet, you may experience sensitivity to sheets rubbing against them or feel discomfort if there is a draft going across your feet. Try wearing thick socks to neutralize these effects. If your mind is racing, try the progressive muscle relaxation technique described above.

Setting a routine for yourself can also help you cope with the emotional effects of nerve pain. Create a list of tasks and goals for the day or the week. This will help motivate you to focus on daily activities rather than your nerve pain.