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Chapter Three

The final frontier to my three part series on, “What is Chronic Pain?”

I hope you have enjoyed my first two segments on *“What is Chronic Pain?”* Chronic Pain is persistent and there are great techniques to help alleviate pain.

Several of my favorites are:

Aromatherapy

Massage

Heat & Ice

Yoga

Tai Chi

Mindfulness.

There are more and only on your journey can you learn about the many great techniques that are available to try. It means having an open mind.

Aromatherapy

I love essential oils, the scent and the soothing properties of each drop sends me into a place that is relaxing and pain free. I sleep better, have mental clarity and my muscles are soothed.

Here are a list of essential oils that are beneficial for chronic pain:

- **Camphor** - combined with eucalyptus and lavender in a massage oil, works well at relaxing your muscles as well as a headache. It is known as a decongestant, providing anti-microbial and anesthetic qualities. **Mixes** well with eucalyptus and peppermint.
- **Peppermint** - combined with lavender in cold compresses it is great for relieving a headache. Also used as a digestive aid, while mixed in a clockwise direction using gentle massage. It is an analgesic, antiseptic, astringent, carminative, cephalic, decongestant, digestive, expectorant, nervine, stimulant, stomachic and febrifuge. **Mixes** well with lavender, rosemary, eucalyptus and lemon.
- **Eucalyptus** - works great as a decongestant in a steam inhalation, for colds, flu and other respiratory ailments. Clears the head and relieves headaches and neuralgia. It's an insect repellent and good for treating bites and stings. Helps to relieve the pain of shingles when blended with bergamot. Can be used as a mouthwash to fight cold sores and herpes. Known as an analgesic, antibacterial, anti-neuralgic, antirheumatic, diuretic, deodorant, astringent, antiviral, antispasmodic and expectorant. **Mixes** well with camphor, lavender and peppermint.

- **Lavender** - the most versatile of all oils. It works as an analgesic, anti-depressant, antiseptic, antiviral, decongestant, deodorant, hypotensive, nervine, sedative and tonic. Overall it is soothing, calming, and relaxing. Great for treating colds and flus, as a use in steam inhalations. A cold compress of headaches. It also repels insects, and remove the stinging. **Mixes** well with other citruses, herbs and florals.
- **Frankincense** - helps to relieve fear, anxiety, nervous tension and stress. It counteracts respiratory problems and helps with colds, bronchitis, asthma, coughs and sore throats. Known best as an anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, astringent, carminative, digestive, diuretic, expectorant, sedative and tonic. It **mixes** well with patchouli, clary sage, rosemary, basil and vetiver.
- **Helichrysum** - stimulates the liver, gall bladder, kidneys and pancreas, when used in a lymphatic drainage massage. It is helpful in treating bruises as a cold compress. Its anti-inflammatory properties makes it a good use for inflamed skin, eczema, psoriasis, rashes and arthritic joints. Known for it's anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antiseptic, carminative, diuretic, expectorant, hepatic and nervine qualities. **Mixes** well with most citruses, florals, clove and clary sage.
- **Melissa** - known as both lemon balm or lemon. It aids in shock, depression, grief and anxiety. It also helps to relieve stress, insomnia and nervous tension. It's best known as an anti-depressant, antiseptic, antispasmodic, antiviral, bactericidal, carminative, febrifuge, hypotensor, nervine, sedative and tonic. **Mixes** well with florals, citruses, lavender, rose, geranium and myrtle.

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- **Rosewood** - it's one of the most spiritual essential oils. Helps with nervous tension, depression, lethargy, apathy and chronic fatigue. Suitable for all skin types, especially sun damaged and sensitive. It's known as an antidepressant, antiseptic, aphrodisiac, bactericide, cephalic, deodorant and stimulant. **Mixes** well with most essential oils.
- **Lemon** - helps counteract acidity and is useful for rheumatic conditions, gout, arthritis, and digestion. Also is useful in skin care to brighten the complexion. It also helps to fight infection, and used to prevent infection by spritzing some into the air. It's known best for these qualities: anti-microbial, antirheumatic, antiseptic, antispasmodic, astringent, diuretic, tonic, and bactericide. **Mixes** well with most citruses and florals, and most essential oils.
- **Grapefruit** - great for lymphatic drainage massage, helping to treat water retention and cellulite. Also good for a congested and overheated liver, and mixed with rosemary in a morning bath to help with a hangover. It's also good if you are feeling lethargic, physically and emotionally exhausted. Known as an antidepressant, antiseptic, antispasmodic, astringent, depurative, diuretic, stimulant and tonic. **Mixes** well with palmarosa, neroli, rosemary, cypress, juniper, lavender, jasmine and ylang ylang.
- **Bergamot** - great for treating depression and anxiety, urinary tract infections, and cystitis. It's used in cosmetics as an antiseptic. Psychologically it helps to treat Seasonal Affective Disorder. Best known as an analgesic, antiseptic, antidepressant, antispasmodic, carminative, deodorant, digestive, sedative, stomachic and tonic. **Mixes** well with cypress, sandalwood, juniper, coriander, black pepper, ginger, clary sage, rosemary and frankincense.

- **Ylang Ylang** - is good for treating depression, when there is nervous tension. Known as an antidepressant, antiseptic, aphrodisiac, hypotensive and sedative. **Mixes** well with florals, citruses, verbena, nutmeg, rosewood, patchouli, clove, vetiver and sandalwood.
- **Sandalwood** - excellent for nervous tension and depression. Is also a powerful aphrodisiac, and sexual problems caused by stress, anxiety and feelings of isolation. Helps to prevent tension headaches and relieve insomnia. Known as an antidepressant, antiseptic, antispasmodic, aphrodisiac, astringent, bactericide, expectorant, sedative and tonic. **Mixes** well with most florals, rosewood, clover, black pepper, cypress, vetiver, patchouli and bergamot.
- **Sweet Marjoram** - this helps with pain on all levels. It relaxes tight, stiff muscles, easing rheumatic pain through gentle massage. Relieves menstrual cramps, flatulence and constipation. Known best for its use as an analgesic, aphrodisiac, antiseptic, antispasmodic, carminative, digestive, hypotensor, sedative, tonic and vasodilator. **Mixes** well with most herbs, lavender, bergamot, cypress, chamomile, juniper and eucalyptus.
- **Geranium** - known as an antidepressant, antiseptic, astringent, deodorant, diuretic, hemostatic, tonic and vulnerary. Use in massage blends for lymphatic drainage massage, wound healing, personal hygiene and an air refresher. It's also good for hormone balancing and menstrual problems. **Mixes** well with bergamot, lavender, basil, rosemary, black pepper, rose, neroli, sandalwood, juniper, lemon, patchouli, jasmine and orange.

- **Rosemary** - it is great for use in massage for relaxing tight, overworked muscles, relieving fluid retention and detoxifying the lymphatic system. Good tonic for treating dandruff, and an antiseptic for burns. Known best as an analgesic, antiseptic, antispasmodic, astringent, carminative, digestive, diuretic, hypertensor, stimulant and tonic. **Mixes** well with most spices, lavender, bergamot, basil, frankincense, juniper, pine, thyme, verbena, melissa, cedarwood and petitgrain.

Base Oils

- **Sweet Almond Oil** - It's rich in minerals, vitamins and proteins, and used in cosmetics for their therapeutic properties. It's very nice for dry, sensitive and irritated skin. It's both softening, revitalizing and nourishing to the skin. This is your best multi-purpose base oil for massage.
- **Apricot Kernel Oil** - This oil absorbs easily into the skin. This can be used safely for both facial and body massage. Great for mature, dry, sensitive and inflamed skin.
- **Avocado Oil** - This oil penetrates on a deep level, and usually mixed with sweet almond oil due to it's lighter properties. It is very rich and full of nutrients, which hydrates an undernourished, dry, dehydrated and mature skin type. Can also be used to combat eczema.
- **Coconut Oil** - Makes excellent skin cream, which adds gloss and shine to lackluster hair as well as make an excellent massage oil.
- **Grapeseed Oil** - This is a very popular massage oil, and can easily be absorbed into the skin.

*** Also **Evening Primrose Oil, Hazelnut Oil, Jojoba Oil, Rosehip-Seed Oil**

Massage

- Indian Head Massage
- Lymphatic Drainage Massage
- Aromatherapy Massage
 - Acupressure Points
 - Reflexology
- **Indian Head Massage** - this is an ancient Indian technique which stems from the Ayurveda system of medicine; known to balance the body, mind, spirit and promotion of life. Known as “*Champissage*” which relaxes the face, head, neck, shoulders, upper back and upper arms. It is most beneficial in treating:
 - relaxation
 - improved circulation and oxygen to the brain
 - calms, revitalizes and uplifts the spirit
 - relaxes tight muscles, stiffness, knots and nodules in muscle tissues
 - increases joint mobility
 - improves lymphatic drainage while removing waste and toxins
 - helps with mental tiredness, stress, depression, mental clarity, alertness and concentration, sinus congestion, insomnia, eye strain, tension headaches, migraines, earaches, tinnitus and jaw pain.
 - healthy shine to hair, improved skin condition, while encouraging deep breathing, deep relaxation, hair growth and endorphins.

** There are some contraindications you may want to consider before having this type of massage, please refer to the list by following this link.

<http://www.indianheadmassagecanada.com>

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Lymphatic Drainage Massage - I have taken a course in this and believe in the benefits you can receive. It is a highly specialized & gentle massage that increases the lymph flow and encourages the natural draining of the lymph flow.

- removes metabolic waste, excess water, toxins, bacteria, large protein molecules, and foreign substances
- alleviates pain by decreasing pain signals to the brain
- relaxes sympathetic nervous system, and relieving stress
- supports and enhances immune system
- promotes healing from injuries, surgical trauma, chronic conditions and decreases edema
- minimizes scar formation

*** For more information you can refer to

<http://www.physiohealthstudios.com/services/lymphatic-massage/>

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Aromatherapy Massage - this type of massage helps to enhance your mood, relieve stress, energize and encourage overall health. It works in combination with essential oils. Using slow movements called “effleurage”, which helps to increase better nourishment and oxygen to the tissues easing muscular aches, pains and fatigue.

Benefits are:

- relaxed state of alertness
- reduced mental stress
- relief of muscular tension and stiffness
- reduced muscle spasms
- better joint flexibility
- lower levels of anxiety
- decreased blood pressure
- stronger immune system

*** For more information, please click on this link:

http://www.essentials-of-aromatherapy.com/aromatherapy_massage.html

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Acupressure - this requires the same sites as used in acupuncture by Traditional Chinese Medicine specialists. By pressing on these locations of the body, they produce high levels of endorphins, which help to alleviate symptoms.

Kidney 1 - This point can be located in the middle of the metatarsal arch on the foot. The metatarsal pad correlates with the ball of your foot. It is in the midline of the foot, at the center of the ball of the foot.

Liver 3 - This point is located on the top of your foot. Start at the web between the big toe and the second toe; guiding your finger up a thumb's width. When you find a natural depression start there.

Heart 6 - With the palm of your hand facing upward, bring your wrist towards your body. As you do this, you will notice two tendons in your forearm become prominent. The Heart 6 point is on the thumb side of those two tendons, one-half finger width above the wrist creases.

Small Intestine 3 - With your hand in a fist (not too tight), begin to notice a crease that forms in the palm, extending to the skin near the bottom of your pinky finger. The same location is a meeting point of the red and white skin. The point you need is at the cross of the red and white skin on that crease.

Gall Bladder 41 Acupuncture/Acupressure Point - Located between the fourth and fifth toes, halfway between the web of the toes and the anklebone.

CV 17 - Located in the center of your breastbone, an emotional balancing point that helps to relieve stress and chronic pain.

** Try pressing these points for at least one to five minutes, there should be some decrease in pain.

<http://chronicpain.newlifeoutlook.com/acupressure-chronic-pain/>

Reflexology - One of the goals of reflexology is to put you into a parasympathetic state, to help your body rest and repair. You have reached this state when your eyes are heavy and your breathing slows down, leaving you at times feeling chilly.

Sessions are one hour that includes a wonderful foot and calf massage after. Reflexology works on the different areas of your feet that correspond to each organ and system of our bodies.

Benefits are:

- tension relief
- improved circulation
- reduced stress
- calm emotions
- promotion of your body's natural healing function

*** To access more information you can contact the:

In Vancouver: <http://www.pacificreflexology.com>

In Nanaimo: http://www.be-loved-holistic-health.com/Foot_Reflexology.html

In Toronto: <http://www.pacificwellness.ca/reflexology.html>

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Heat and Ice - mixing heat and cold is quite beneficial to living with chronic pain. Physiotherapists recommend you alternate between the two. Heat before you start an activity, and when you finish applying ice. And not leaving it on for more than 10 minutes at a time.

*** Recommend seeing a Physiotherapist for their professional recommendations.

Yoga - Restorative Yoga appears to be the best overall for chronic pain. There are twenty styles of Yoga that can be practiced, and of course you need to be selective in choosing the right style according to your physical needs and challenges.

Yoga Styles: Ananda Yoga, Anusara Yoga, Ashtanga Yoga, Bikram Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Integral Yoga, ISHTA, Iyengar Yoga, Jivamukti Yoga, Kali Ray TriYoga, Kripalu, Kundalini, Power Yoga, Restorative Yoga, Sivananda Yoga, Svaroopaa Yoga, Viniyoga, Vinyasa, White Lotus Yoga and Yin Yoga.

Ananda - Gentle poses designed to move energy up and down, preparing the body for meditation. They also focus on body alignment and controlled breathing.

Iyengar Yoga - Promotes strength, flexibility, endurance, balance and body alignment. Props such as, cushions, blankets, straps and blocks to assist with the less flexible.

Restorative Yoga - You spend most of your time lying on blocks, blankets, bolsters, that allow your body to relax.

Svaroopa Yoga - Done mostly in a chair, it helps to promote healing and transformation.

Viniyoga - Used for therapy for those that have suffered from injuries or surgery. Tailored to each person's needs as you change and grow.

***** It is always recommended you consult with your physician before attempting any type of exercise program.**

Some links:

<http://www.yogainternational.com/article/view/restorative-yoga-for-chronic-pain>

<http://www.matsmatsmats.com/yoga/yoga-disciplines.html>

<http://www.beachbodycoach.com/esuite/home/LoveFromInside?bctid=3695942706001>

Tai Chi - This exercise has helped me the most when it comes to overall health benefit and fighting chronic pain. I notice an improvement with my circulation, posture, balance, flexibility, and lowered my stress cause from the anxiety of my pain. It definitely will help improve your quality of life. They suggest it as the best exercise overall for those in pain.

Links to share:

<http://www.beachbodycoach.com/esuite/home/LoveFromInside?bctid=1513855864001>

<http://www.pacificcanadataoist.com>

Mindfulness - Basically we need to STOP what you are doing, take a deep breath, observe your thoughts, feelings, emotions and then proceed. Sometimes a walk is necessary to be able to step away from the chaos or the upsetting event that has just taken place, and a shower can help too. There are many techniques available that you can try. With the help of a Counsellor or Social Worker, they can guide you by finding the right technique, cd, dvd or app that might work well for you. It is a useful tool for being able to detach from the pain you are feeling at that moment, and aid in sleeping better. Mindfulness is quieting the mind and allowing it to relax from all the overthinking and pain we find ourselves in at times. For some prayer is a way of unwinding as well, helped us to accept, ground and find comfort in God that is far greater than anything. These are practices used in many cultures.

Links to share:

<http://blogs.psychcentral.com/mindfulness/2009/07/quick-tips-for-mindful-living/>

I hope you find this resource helpful. A concise plan of what has worked for me in trying to overcome my chronic pain. People have that misconception that if you look good on the outside you must be okay. Chronic Pain is real and psychologically can have devastating effects on the brain. Always seek a professional if you find yourself depressed and the pain is just not going away

Thank you for taking the time to read my series on Chronic Pain, my journey of trying to overcome. I hope that you will share it with others that you think it can also help.

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<http://www.yogainternational.com/article/view/restorative-yoga-for-chronic-pain>
<http://www.pacificcanadataoist.com>
<http://www.psychcentral.com/mindfulness/2009/07/quick-tips-for-mindful.living/>

Gill Farrer-Halls, *The Aromatherapy Bible*