

My free e-book was meant to help you prioritize, gather the tools and the team you need; to overcome your chronic pain challenges.

I have suffered five years with chronic pain. It can be a difficult journey at times, yet a willingness to remain open will benefit you in the long run.

It's important to stay pro-active in your health care journey and be open to trying new approaches. I thought a few of them were crazy too, but the thing is I tried them. The doctors were trying to help and I wasn't at a place in my life that I wanted to see myself stuck on long term disability.

I think it seems like that is the solution at times and for some perhaps. I know for a fact it was not best for me. I think each person needs to be evaluated individually, which means building a team of people who are YOUR advocates. There is always some type of solution that can be worked out. The KEY again is being pro-active!

Employers especially want to see that you are trying your best to find ways of helping yourself. It starts with a pain journal. Write everything down!

- What you eat, what you drink and how much in a day.
- Did you exercise, and for how long?
- Did you feel pain at all, and where?
- Do you self medicate, or do you have a prescription?
- How much did you take?
- Did you take it at the first sign of pain, or did you take it too late, because you thought you might get better?
- How well do you sleep?
- Are you up frequently in the night?
- Do you feel tired and depressed during the day?
- Are you emotional?
- With 1 out of 10 what would you rate your pain? (10 being worst and 1 being least)

Take your pain journal to your doctor after a month and let them see your entries. This will help give them an idea, of what exactly might be the problem!

- What types of meds will you need?
- What form of exercise would be beneficial?
- Could Botox be a possibility? There are good results in Botox for managing persistent headaches and other types of neural muscular or chronic pain issues. Of course you will need to get referred to a pain specialist or a neurologist? It may not work, as I have heard it doesn't for all. No one knows though until they try.
- Are there any other alternative therapies that might help?
- What about physiotherapy?
- Can there be some revisions at home with my occupational needs?

If you are having difficulties with your employer regarding this, talk it over with a health and wellness advocate; every workplace has one. Find out what you can do at work towards finding a solution to your problem.

- What is the expectation of the employer?
- Can you look into job modifications? They are available for many; it just means working with your union representative, your doctor, specialist and employer.

I think a person also needs to consider their support network too.

- Do you have any family issues that may be causing you problems?
- Are they supportive?
- What are the dynamics in your home environment?
- Are there any issues that you might need to work out as a family?
- Could you access a Social Worker/Counselor that might help you as a family, problem solve?

No problem is ever too BIG to work through. Believe that there is ALWAYS a solution. It just might take time!

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Supportive Circle

- How supportive are your friends?
- Do you have close friends you can call on and rely for help?
Sometimes this can be very stressing when you are limited in your friends/family resource list. I think that is why some people just give up and then loneliness sets in.
- How can we work towards improving your social circle?
- What are your hobbies?

Hobbies can be a good distraction to pain.

Emotions can play a huge part in how we cope with chronic pain. If we are not happy it can sometimes escalate things, and of course depending where we have this pain. And depending on where it's at, can warrant any challenges. This is why it's important to be in tune with your physical needs, to understand the triggers that aggravate. Then you will curb the pain cycle, hopefully not having as frequent pain levels as prior.

But it's important to give it time and take baby steps.

After 5 years of trying many things, I am starting to feel better. I am even exercising now, which I couldn't do before. I was told that anything that aggravated my neck was going to be difficult to accomplish, so I find things I can do and be successful at. For me protecting my neck always is important, and to modify the exercises that I do. I started with Tai

Chi, my doctor says it's the best overall exercise any one can take. It is the best for showing improved results in mobility, balance and power. I am trying other programs too that are helping build my strength and core.

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[Chapter three](#) will be spent talking about alternative therapies that may benefit you, as well as mindfulness and other techniques.

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