

Chronic Pain and the Pain - Tension Cycle

InsightTimer

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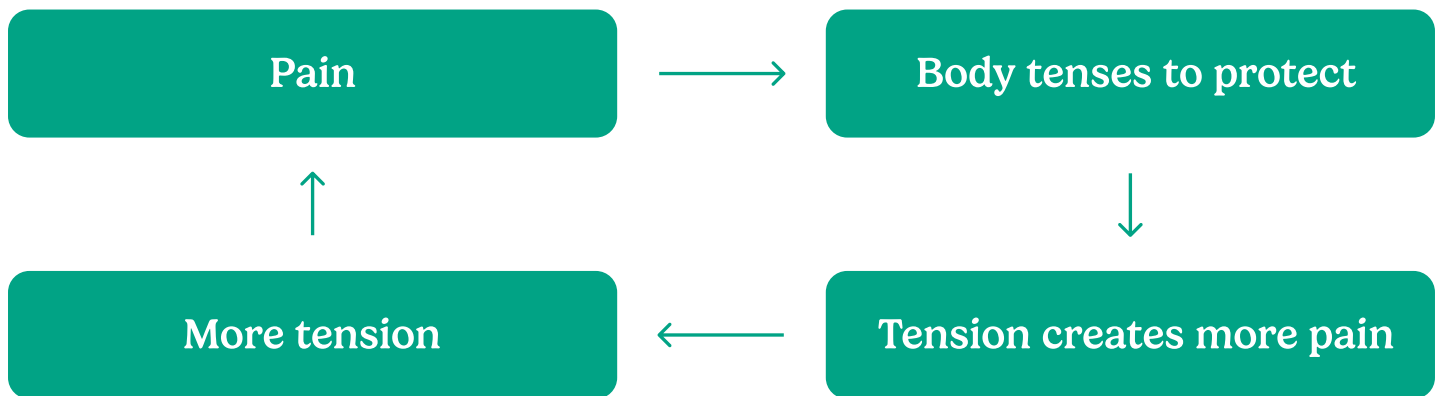


Practice now:

[Mindfulness & Self-Compassion For Chronic Pain](#)

Pain naturally triggers your body to tense up as protection - this is a normal survival response. However, this tension can create additional pain, which leads to more tension, forming a cycle that intensifies your discomfort. Working with your body's wisdom means gently breaking this cycle rather than fighting against it.

The Cycle



How the Cycle Works

01

Breathe Into the Tension

Instead of holding your breath (which increases tension), you might try breathing slowly and see if you can imagine sending your breath to the tense areas around your pain.

Why this helps: Breath naturally relaxes your nervous system and can soften muscle tension.

02

Soften What You Can

You might not be able to soften the pain itself, but notice if you can soften your shoulders? Your jaw? Your hands? Even softening areas away from the pain might help break the cycle.

Why this helps: Releasing tension in one area often helps other areas relax too.

03

Gentle Movement

See if small movements feel okay, like rolling your shoulders, wiggling your toes, or gently turning your head. You might find it helps release tension without increasing pain.

Why this helps: Small movements prevent your body from "locking up" and can improve circulation.

Remember: The goal isn't to eliminate pain, but to work with your body instead of against it.

