

Understanding pain With knowledge comes power

Did you know?

- **There's a lot you can do to ease your pain.**
- **When people understand their pain, it decreases.**
- **All pain comes from your brain.** That doesn't mean it's "all in your head." It means the brain puts together information and creates a pain response.
- **Pain doesn't always equal harm.** Your brain may have become so good at producing pain that it doesn't stop — even when you've recovered from an injury or illness. In a situation like this, don't avoid movement. Inactivity can make your pain worse.
- **Stress and pain are closely related.** Focus on reducing stress, and change the way you respond to stress.

Your relationship with pain

No one wants to feel pain. Whether you stub your toe or bang your finger with a hammer, that short burst of red-hot sensation isn't pleasant. Even more troubling, though, is long-term, chronic pain – also known as persistent pain. This is pain that won't go away, no matter what you try.

Persistent pain can have a profound affect on daily life. It can disrupt your ability to work, exercise, sleep, and enjoy activities and hobbies.

Acute pain versus persistent pain

Acute pain occurs as a direct result of an injury. The brain sends a signal that something is wrong and produces pain so we know to be careful. This is a very useful response.

Persistent pain exists after the danger has past. The danger signal gets "stuck" in the brain and it's no longer useful.

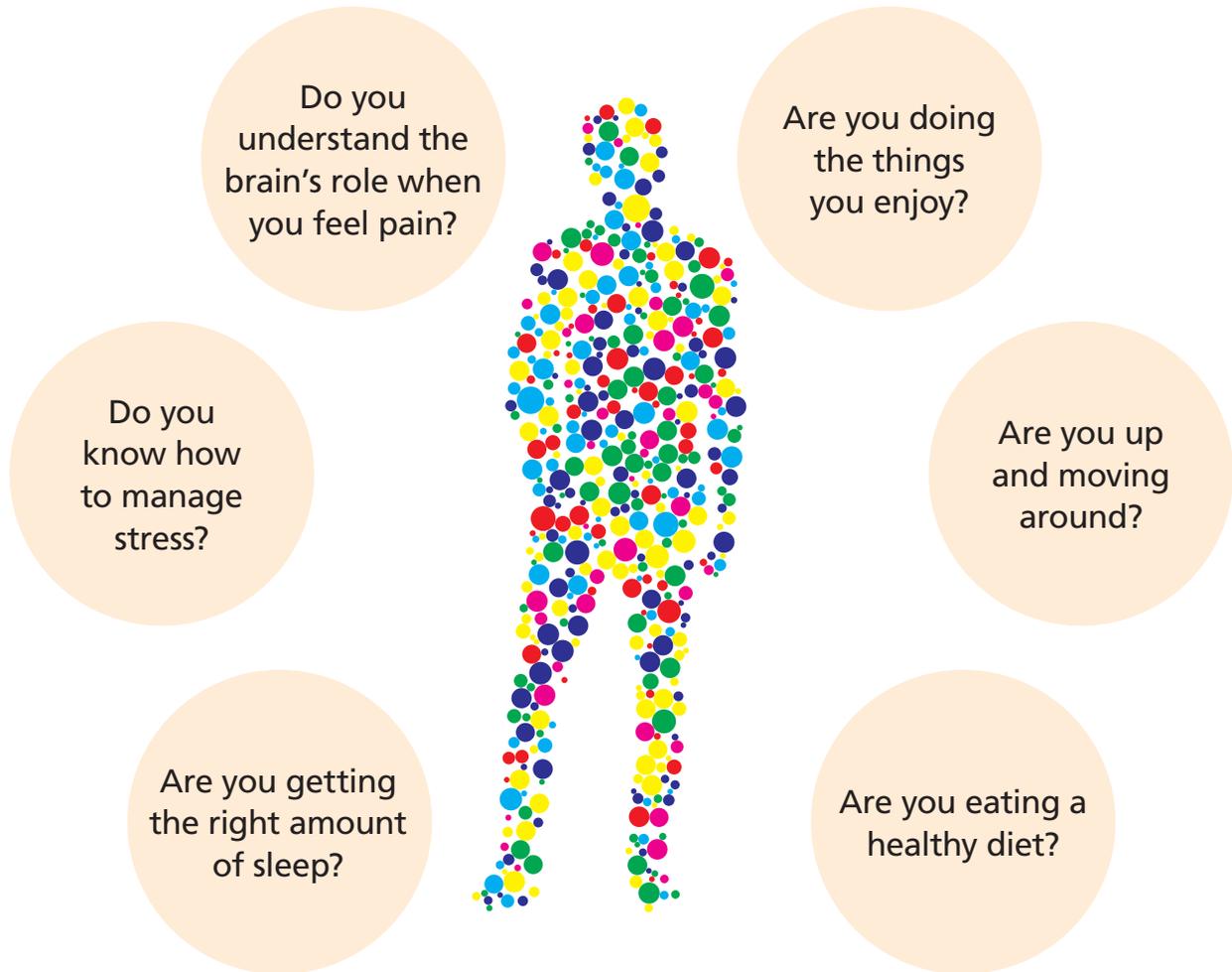
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Brain signals can change your pain

Scientists now know that our thoughts and actions affect how well we recover from pain.

Here's how:



Dial down your pain

Here are some key strategies for retraining your brain and body's pain response:

- Get moving again. Start slowly and keep it up.
- Eat healthfully.
- Learn relaxation techniques and practice them daily. Learn how to reduce stress.
- Connect with others, and be around other people.
- Engage in hobbies you enjoy.
- Get enough sleep, but not too much.

Change can be hard, but you can slowly turn down the volume on pain.