

Moving Forward

A newsletter for those in pain.
November 2007



Pain: A Monster Under the Bed?

Do you remember when you were a child being kept awake by a monster under the bed? Pain is a lot like a childhood monster. Let me explain.

When the monster was winning the battle our ability to move about our room was diminished just like pain can be disabling. Sometimes we became so afraid that we called our parents in to turn on the light. When we fear pain in this manner, we won't move until

we know pain is gone.

Other times, we were able to move through the room by being courageous, or trying to ignore the monster, just like being able to accomplish some things despite pain, helping us keep our sanity.

But we were never completely free until the monster was gone. When we realized they were something familiar to us, like a toy we played with every day, they went away. Pain is exactly the same. To

move without it we must become familiar with it and understand what it tells us.

Read the next section for more on this.



Clinical Example:

Low Back Pain

Low back pain a very common and costly problem in western society. It can be localized to the back or wide-spread and radiating down the leg.

It can be present with specific motions only such as bending forward, standing, walking, or be present constantly. Often times it interrupts sleep, tolerance to activity, can lead to depression, and accounts for a large amount of missed work time in this country.

Involvement of the movement of the hips, pelvis, and mid back are typical.

Common diagnoses treatable with physical therapy include lumbar sprain/strain, sacroiliac pain, herniated lumbar disk, sciatica, piriformis syndrome, degenerative disc disease, and others.

What is pain telling us?

Pain indicates a protective mechanism and has other identifiable characteristics. Movement away from protection and toward correction also has identifiable characteristics.

Indications of a Protective

State:

Stiffness, Muscle spasm, Difficult Movement, Feeling Cold.

Corrective Movement:

Softening, Warming, Effortless & Surprising

Learning to recognize these characteristics and using them to guide your movement means you're speaking pain's language. You can expect your physical therapist to help you learn this skill.



"It is important that you gain understanding of how to interpret what your body is telling you. This gives you control over your pain and increased freedom of movement."

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