

# VitaMin

Vital health information in a minute

## PAIN RELIEF WITHOUT PILLS

How do you handle pain? You might reach for over-the-counter pain relievers. Or you might ask your doctor about prescription medications. But you may also worry about the side effects and the risk of becoming dependent. The good news is, pills aren't the only way to help relieve pain. There are a number of alternative therapies that can help reduce your pain naturally.<sup>1</sup> Here are some to consider with guidance from your doctor.

### Acupuncture

Acupuncture is based on the idea of releasing your body's energy flow. During an office visit, a licensed acupuncturist inserts thin needles into your skin at key points. This may help relieve pain by releasing endorphins.

### Biofeedback

With biofeedback, you learn to change how your body reacts to pain. A health care professional attaches electronic sensors that measure heart rate, skin temperature and muscle tension. This can help you figure out how to relax muscles or change your thoughts for pain relief.

### Chiropractic care

When you receive chiropractic care, a chiropractor performs spinal manipulation to help ease chronic back and neck pain, headaches and musculoskeletal conditions.

### Cognitive behavioral therapy

This is when a psychologist, clinical social worker or counselor works with you to develop the skills you need to deal with pain. This type of therapy can help you change your reaction to pain, ease family problems or cope with depression.

### Massage therapy

During massage therapy, a massage therapist rubs muscles in your back, feet or other parts of your body to release tension and reduce stress. Getting a massage can help relieve pain and help you relax. And, it may also promote healing by improving blood flow.

### Physical therapy

Physical therapy builds muscle strength and improves flexibility to help combat pain. A physical therapist can work with you to identify activities that trigger pain and find ways to avoid or adapt to them.

### Source:

1. National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health. "Chronic Pain: In Depth." <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/pain/chronic.htm> (last reviewed/updated March 21, 2018)

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