

HOW PHYSIOTHERAPISTS MANAGE PAIN



As Canada combats a devastating opioid epidemic, safer, non-opioid treatments have never been of greater need. Internationally, physiotherapy is recognized as a safe and effective alternative for pain and is recommended in guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other groups urging the avoidance of opioids for most pain treatment.

Whereas opioids only mask the sensation of pain, physiotherapists treat pain through movement. Here's how:

- 1** | **Exercise.** A study following 20,000 people over 11 years found that those who exercised on a regular basis, experienced less pain. And among those who exercised more than 3 times per week, chronic widespread pain was 28% less common¹. Physiotherapists can prescribe exercise specific to your goals and needs.
- 2** | **Manual Therapy.** Research supports a hands-on approach to treating pain. From carpal tunnel syndrome² to low back pain³, this type of care can effectively reduce your pain and improve your movement. Physiotherapists may use manipulation, joint and soft tissue mobilizations, and dry needling, as well as other strategies in your care.
- 3** | **Education.** A large study conducted with military personnel demonstrated that those with back pain who received a 45 minute educational session about pain, were less likely to seek treatment than their peers who didn't receive education about pain. Physiotherapists will talk with you to make sure they understand your pain history, and help set realistic expectations about your treatment.
- 4** | **Teamwork.** Recent studies have shown that developing a positive relationship with your physiotherapist and being an active participant in your own recovery can impact your success. This is likely because physiotherapists are able to work directly with you and assess how your pain responds to treatment.

Read more about **Pain** and **Chronic Pain** Syndromes at [physiotherapy.ca](https://www.physiotherapy.ca).

This year the Canadian Physiotherapy Association is partnering with the American Physical Therapy Association to raise awareness about the risks of opioids and the safe alternative of physiotherapy pain management. Learn more at our [#PhysioCanHelp](#) page.

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References

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