**Chronic Pain Flare Emergency Self-Care Plan**

A pain flare is a period of increased pain. A flare can be caused by many things, such as: stress, illness, injury, anxiety, medication changes, change in sleep patterns, etc. It is important that you have a plan for managing a flare, because it is difficult to think clearly when you are in crisis. Create your plan, here; tell a family member or friend about your plan, and post it where it can be easily found. The suggestions here are heavily based on a self-care booklet, “*Managing Chronic Pain*,” available at: [**https://kr.ihc.com/ext/Dcmnt?ncid=521195887**](https://kr.ihc.com/ext/Dcmnt?ncid=521195887)**.**

**Name**: **Date plan last updated**:

**Affirm your strength:** Write a statement that reminds you of your strength to get through a flare:

**Who can help you through a flare?**

Name: Contact info:

Name: Contact info:

**Mind and Spirit Approaches:**

**Replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts**:

**Relaxation & mindfulness**:

**Managing stress**:

**Improving sleep**:

**Nurturing spirit, finding joy**:

**Physical Approaches:**

**Devices such as heat, ice, TENS, massage machine**:

**Topical rubs (menthol, capsaicin, salicylate):**

**Trigger point management with ball, cane, etc.:**

**Exercise (stretching, walking, yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi, etc.):**

**Rescue Medication(s):**

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**Name**: Sample **Date plan last updated**: 12/3/19

**Affirm your strength:** Write a statement that reminds you of your strength to get through a flare:

These flares don’t last forever, and I can do things to make them end sooner. I have survived flares before, and I will get through this one, too.

**Who can help you through a flare?**

Name: Husband Contact info: “hey, handsome!” ;-)

Name: Best friend Contact info: (315)xxx-xxxx

**Mind and Spirit Approaches:**

**Replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts**: “I have good days, too,” instead of “I will never get better.”

“I can still do XYZ, today, in spite of my pain.” Instead of “I can’t do anything when I feel like this”

**Relaxation & mindfulness**: Listen to “Managing Pain” meditation on Calm app. Do my yoga breathing. Do something distracting, like a jigsaw puzzle or coloring in my Playful Puppies picture book.

**Managing stress**: Stop pressuring myself to always push to get things done – take a day off. It is okay if I can’t clean the kitchen or do yard work. Plan to do pleasant activities, like watch a movie on TV.

**Improving sleep**: Take a hot shower 30 minutes before bed. Listen to “30 Days to Better Sleep” meditation on Daily Habit app. Take a Benadryl at bedtime if I really need a good night’s sleep.

**Nurturing spirit, finding joy**: Look back at my Gratitude Journal and list 5 things or people for which I am grateful. Snuggle up with my dog. Listen to affirmations YouTube.

**Physical Approaches:**

**Devices such as heat, ice, TENS, massage machine**: TENS machine on my back and/or neck, “deep massage” setting, with hot packs. If I have headaches, use an ice pack on my neck trigger points.

**Topical rubs (menthol, capsaicin, salicylate):** Biofreeze for muscle pain and trigger points. Arthricreme if my joints hurt.

**Trigger point management with ball, cane, etc.:** Roll a tennis ball along my spine for upper back pain and headaches. Sit on a tennis ball for sciatica pain.

**Exercise (stretching, walking, yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi, etc.):** Walking, if my foot doesn’t hurt too much and weather is okay. Pilates core stabilization for my low back. Tai Chi for overall achiness.

**Rescue Medication(s):**  Extra strength Tylenol if it isn’t too bad, Tramadol if it is really, really bad.