

17 Obstacles: Responding to chronic pain

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1. **Inconvenience:** Everyone would agree that appointments tend to add stress to our already busy schedules. We think, "It better be worth my time!"
2. **Short-term effects:** When any type of therapy produces benefits that are short-lived, it is usually indicative of the poor long-term outcomes.
3. **The comfort zone:** Many find "the unknown" intimidating and are more content dealing with pain than finding real solutions that involve relational interaction.
4. **Right therapist quandary:** Is this the right match for me and my problems? It may even just be a personality issue.
5. **The wimp factor:** Many perceive the vulnerable nature of seeking help for pain as weakness, maybe afraid their personal toughness will be questioned.
6. **"It's all in your head":** Unfortunately, this phrase is still widely heard, but rarely the cause of pain. Typically it has more to do with the lacking of knowledge and understanding from the healthcare provider.
7. **Mask the symptoms:** Although sometimes necessary, pain killers allow one to ignore the whole problem as if it weren't even there and thus never deal with the root causes.
8. **Bad past experience:** Many who have tried a therapy and found the outcomes poor are left unsatisfied. These outcomes may be then projected upon others who share the same professional title.
9. **Oversimplification:** Complex issues contributing to pain can be narrowed down to concepts that are too "black and white." An example is the person with poor posture told, "Just stand up straight!"
10. **Fear of being misled:** Is the healthcare professional going to use their professional authority to consciously or subconsciously mislead me?
11. **Procrastination:** This habit may make a crisis necessary to provoke action.
12. **"It's all from stress":** Stress gets a good deal of blame these days but is usually more a magnifier of the weak links of the body rather than the cause of the pain.
13. **Fear of awkward interaction:** If I start treatment and decide it's not the right approach for me, how am I going to tell the therapist or office staff? How will I tell the physician who may have referred me?
14. **Dependency Model:** Is the therapist going to try to just "keep me coming back?"
15. **Playing Victim:** It's easy to fall into this defeated attitude that tends to squash all areas of personal growth.
16. **It's expensive:** No matter which therapy direction you choose, the investment can be spendy. It's even more a financial burden if the therapy fails to achieve long-term results.
17. **Communication:** Many times the words patients use to describe their symptoms differ from words therapists use. For example, "I don't have *chronic pain*, my neck muscles are just *tight and sore* all the time."

Chronic pain doesn't have to get the best of you with the proper care.