

Chronic pain and illness

Explaining What Pain or Illness Changes

Adults | 10 to 15 minutes

Pain or illness may change the effort required for ordinary activities, even when others cannot see it. Start with a task that matters to you. Your description can include physical, emotional, and practical effects without deciding that any one factor explains everything.

Choose one recent task. Follow your existing healthcare guidance and describe what happened without pushing through symptoms to test yourself.

Describe the task accurately

Notice what the task required, where difficulty appeared, and what happened afterward. Include variability and assistance rather than comparing yourself with an ideal level of output.

Choose support or a question

A smaller task, accessible option, help from another person, or a healthcare review may be appropriate. Specify what is needed and who is qualified to help.

1. Which activity has become difficult or costly for me?**2. What effect does it have during or afterward?****3. What adaptation or practical help would make a difference?****4. What symptom change or treatment question should my healthcare team review?****Clinical use and adaptation**

Validate symptoms and avoid assuming a psychological cause. Do not prescribe medication, exercise progression, or forced activity. Assess new or worsening symptoms appropriately and adapt for post-exertional worsening, sensory needs, and accessibility.