

The [Pain Truth videos](#) & [Workbook](#) are part of a **6-week program** and aim to improve the quality of life and the management of your persistent pain.

It is **absolutely essential** to complete the activities and instructions outlined in *The Pain Truth and Nothing But! Workbook*.

(Video is on www.youtube.com) (Workbook is on www.amazon.ca)

Pain Truth Video #3 **Transcript**

Welcome to part 3 of *The Pain Truth* video. Before we begin, I make an assumption that you've already completed the 10 Danger and 10 Safety questions from the Part 2 video.



So far, you've learned that **all pain is real** and that, although you may feel the actual pain in your back, neck, shoulders or knees, all pain is only perceived in the brain.

You have also learned that pain can sometimes persist and be severe even when there is no serious injury or damage to the body. This happens because the spinal cord and the brain can magnify pain: this is referred to as **nervous system hypersensitivity**.



Basically, when you feel pain for a long time, the nervous system and the brain physically change and **become really good at feeling pain**. Just like if you did any activity for several hours a day every day, you would inevitably get really good at doing the activity, whether it's playing the violin or playing basketball or, in this case, feeling pain.

We also learned that the brain is continuously monitoring for any dangers. If the brain judges that we are **safe** overall, both physically and emotionally, it releases pain relieving chemicals such as **morphine and serotonin** which **keep us calm and relaxed**.

You now know about **DIMs** which stands for **Dangers in Me** and **SIMs** which stands for **Safety in Me**. If the brain judges that we are in danger overall, both physically and emotionally, it stops releasing the pain relieving chemicals and may **release adrenaline** -this can actually increase sensations of pain.

To reduce nervous system hypersensitivity, you basically need to do two things: first, increase the number and the intensity of things your brain perceives as being safe. Secondly reduce the number and the intensity of things your brain sees as being dangerous.

Regretfully, the brain of a person who falls into the persistent pain cycle gets really good at focusing on potential things that are dangerous and stressful and stops focusing on all the things that are still safe and good in their life.

At times of acute danger the brain **should** focus on the potential danger for survival; as priority is to remove the hand from the stovetop. However if long after the initial acute injury, the pain still persists and

becomes chronic, not only is focusing on pain not beneficial, it is potentially harmful. Once again I am assuming that you have already seen a physician and that serious medical conditions have been ruled out.

However if your doctor has sent you for an x-ray or an MRI, there is a good chance you've been told of all the "abnormalities" they've found. Naturally your brain will perceive your arthritis or disc bulges as dangerous, and will focus on the dangers and cause you unnecessary stress; when the truth is that for the vast majority of cases radiological findings are irrelevant.

Our thoughts and stresses can be like heavy rocks that we carry on our backs, necks and shoulders. So stop carrying a heavy rock on your back, especially when it is exhausting you and not serving you.

What if you intentionally with your thoughts focused on making the rock smaller? Or even better put the rock down. It's **your** thought; you can do whatever you want. Here is an excellent quote dating back to 1890 from Dr. William James, "*The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.*"

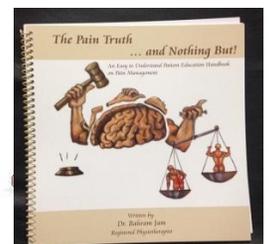
You can instantly lessen your persistent focus on life stresses by making a conscious effort to shift your attention to what is still enjoyable, safe and good in your life. This is certainly not an easy task, especially when one is in pain, but it's definitely possible. You can instantly lessen your thoughts about your past stresses and lessen your worries about your future, by shifting your focus to the present. Here is a popular quote, "*Those who live in the past can experience depression; those who live in future can experience anxiety and those who are in the present experience peace of mind.*"

As you will see, I strongly recommend practicing mindfulness to all my patients who realize that stress and fear are contributing factors to their pain. With practice, the brain can change based on how we use it and choose to think. Your brain will reduce the weight of the rock you're now carrying once it realizes that it is safe to put it down. So how can you make your brain feel safe?



Here are 10 actions you can take to help your brain feel safe and, in time, reduce your nervous system hypersensitivity and improve the quality of your life.

1. **Understand the truth about pain.** Understand and fully appreciate that, although your pain may be severe, it does not necessarily mean that you have a severe injury. Studies show that those who truly understand that their brain is a contributing factor to their pain recover much



better than those who continue to believe that the problem lies only in the specific part of their body. There have even been cases where the brain calms down immediately in those who receive pain education and understand the concept of nervous system hypersensitivity. To learn more please read **The Pain Truth** book available on www.amazon.ca and any of the other excellent books referenced at the end of this video.

2. **Breathe and be mindful.** Put one hour a day aside for relaxation, focused breathing or mindfulness meditation. You may or may have not done this in the past. There are so many studies to support those who do daily mindfulness meditation have significant reduction in their pain and a reduced need for pain medications. This is as easy as joining a Yoga class or typing “Mindfulness meditation” on Youtube (specifically look into Jon Kabat-Zinn).

3. **Drink water.** I don't know exactly how many cups, but a few cups of plain water. Limit your caffeinated drinks, sugary drinks and juices. You can surely appreciate that highly sugary and caffeinated drinks stimulate nerves and can increase nervous system hypersensitivity that you are trying to decrease.



4. **Eat food.** By food I mean anything that looks like real actual food and that is not out of a box, package or out of a drive through window. It's simple: have **2 servings of fruit and 2 servings of fresh vegetables every day**, or consider seeing a registered dietician. I know it's a cliché, but what you eat does affect how you feel. So do your best to eat well for your pain.



5. **Start moving.** You must devote at least **one hour each and every day** to consciously moving. This doesn't mean that you have to do the one hour all at once. You could break it up into four 15 minute sessions or six 10 minute sessions in a day. The movement can be walking in the park, Tai chi, Yoga, aqua fitness, lifting dumbbells – whatever works for you. A physical therapist can help you set realistic physical goals and help prescribe the ideal physical activity for you.



6. **Sleep well.** Try every trick in *The Pain Truth* book to help you sleep better; things as simple as going to bed at the same time every night and avoiding computer or phone screens before bed time. Speak to your doctor about your sleep issues; perhaps go to a sleep clinic. Prescription sleep medications should be the last resort.



7. **Spend time outside.** Did you know that humans now are the only true generation of cavemen? At no time in the history of mankind have we ever spent more time indoors than we do now. The human body was meant to be outside, not locked up day and night in a room or an office with artificial lighting. We need to see real light, we need to see and feel the sun. If plants had our lives most of them would surely wilt away. Have your doctor check your vitamin D levels; you may benefit from supplements, but that still doesn't replace going for a walk or sitting outside **for one hour!**



8. **Write down your DIMs, stresses and emotions.** Certainly stress can increase pain, but did you know that buried or suppressed emotions may be the reason your pain is not getting better? Sit down and write a list of all the emotional issues you can think of (e.g. *anger, hurt, shame, fear, guilt, etc.*). Don't underestimate the



power of writing therapy. There is no right or wrong way of writing out your feelings... just write whatever you feel. There is no need to "fix" anything, it's only important that you become aware of your emotions. If there are issues in your life that make you feel angry or guilty for feeling angry, write them down. No longer hide them. There is no need to share your writings with anyone; you have the option of tearing the paper and throwing it out. Do this for **15 minutes every day**; you may be surprised how good writing therapy feels and how it can reduce your pain. If your current job is a major source of stress, then make a plan to do something. Staying at a stressful job because you feel like you have no other options can be emotionally draining; you can't just keep ignoring the stress ...your health depends on it.

My top 3 current stresses are...

.....

.....

.....

Please complete this "contract" to yourself.

I, _____ understand certain emotional stresses can
(your name)

contribute to my pain. The emotions may be (check the boxes that may apply to you)

- Anger; because of..... *e.g. my work*
- Sadness; because of..... *e.g. I don't know*
- Guilt; because of..... *e.g. My father*
- Fear; because of..... *e.g. My disc bulge*
-

I also understand that identifying stressful emotions is essential for my recovery. I do not necessarily have to "fix" anything, for now just acknowledging is needed. If required, I may of course see my physician and request counselling and professional help.

What I Can Do About my Pain?

Areas of S Score to improve in <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the areas that apply to you	What you could do to improve <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> whatever you think is realistic for you	What about the change is important to me? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> whatever you think is accurate for you
① <input type="checkbox"/> My current level of physical activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk <input type="checkbox"/> Cycle <input type="checkbox"/> Swim <input type="checkbox"/> Gym <input type="checkbox"/> Yoga <input type="checkbox"/> Tai chi <input type="checkbox"/> Jog <input type="checkbox"/> Garden <input type="checkbox"/> Dance <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce my pain <input type="checkbox"/> Improve my sleep <input type="checkbox"/> Improve my mood <input type="checkbox"/>
② <input type="checkbox"/> My level of family support	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask a family member to remind me and support me to do my daily exercises <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce my pain <input type="checkbox"/> Improve my mood <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce my stress <input type="checkbox"/>
③ <input type="checkbox"/> My job/employer/co-worker satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/> Be more positive at work <input type="checkbox"/> Apply for a new position <input type="checkbox"/> Consider career change <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce my pain <input type="checkbox"/> Improve my mood <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce my stress <input type="checkbox"/>
④ <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfaction with my health care providers	<input type="checkbox"/> Change my MD or therapist <input type="checkbox"/> Accept that they are doing their best and they really care <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce my stress <input type="checkbox"/>
⑤ <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of my diet / smoking / alcohol habits	<input type="checkbox"/> Stop smoking <input type="checkbox"/> ↓alcohol <input type="checkbox"/> Eat 2 fresh fruits /day <input type="checkbox"/> Eat 3 fresh vegetables/day <input type="checkbox"/> Minimize eating out <input type="checkbox"/> Make my own food (not processed) <input type="checkbox"/> Eat only ingredients I can pronounce <input type="checkbox"/> Minimize sugars and refined carbs <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce my pain <input type="checkbox"/> Improve my digestion <input type="checkbox"/> Improve my sleep <input type="checkbox"/> Increase my energy <input type="checkbox"/> Improve my mood <input type="checkbox"/>
⑥ <input type="checkbox"/> Time spent outdoors / in nature / sun / vitamin D	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk in the park 30 min. at noon and pay attention to trees, squirrels and birds <input type="checkbox"/> Take Vitamin D supplements <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce my pain <input type="checkbox"/> Improve my sleep <input type="checkbox"/> Increase my energy <input type="checkbox"/>

9. **Write down SIMs and do fun things.** Write a list of everything that you've ever enjoyed doing or have considered fun. These could be activities you did when you were a child or many years ago. Do something fun for at least **an hour every day**. It doesn't have to be expensive, exotic or physical. Make a point of listening to music or an old record that you once enjoyed, draw, paint, go dancing, join a walking group, go to a movie with a friend, play an instrument, meet an old friend for lunch and talk **about anything but your pain**, sing in the shower, smile for no reason.



Although hard to believe, just keeping a constant 'fake' smile can make a person feel better and reduce pain. Try it for **one whole minute**. Then try a 'fake' laugh for **15 seconds**. You've got to try it...endorphins are very powerful painkillers without any side effects!



Focus on bringing joy to someone else; compliment others, hold the door open for the person behind you, hug someone, volunteer in a hospital or seniors' home, etc. It is really the single best way of focusing away from your DIMs, problems and stresses. **It is guaranteed to make you feel better.**

Write down below 3 potentially enjoyable and fun activities that you could do to make you feel better.

My top 3 potential enjoyable / fun activities are...

-
-
-

Please complete this "contract" to yourself.

I, _____ understand that regularly doing activities I find enjoyable or used to find "fun" can help me with my pain. I can (check the boxes that may apply to you)

- Listen to music and/or gently dance daily e.g.
- Go out with family or a friend e.g.
- Go for a walk or short hike e.g.
- Help someone even in a small way e.g.
-

I also understand that identifying and focusing on all the activities that I am still able to do is essential for my recovery. I don't have to do any activity for a long period of time; any amount of joy is valuable. If I cannot think of a single fun or enjoyable activity that I could do today to uplift my mood, I need to discuss this with my physician.

<p>Areas of S Score to improve in</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the areas that apply to you</p>	<p>What you could do to improve</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> whatever you think is realistic for you</p>	<p>What about the change is important to me?</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> whatever you think is accurate for you</p>
<p>⑦ <input type="checkbox"/> Practicing relaxation, mindfulness & body scan</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Try 15 min. of mindfulness breathing a day (look on Youtube)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Take Yoga classes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Try 10 min. of body scan meditation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Reduce my pain</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Improve my mood</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Reduce my stress</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>⑧ <input type="checkbox"/> Quality and quantity of my sleep</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Exercise daily</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Listen to relaxation music</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Wear ear plugs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Wear night shades over eyes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Change old mattress</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sleep in another room as my partner snores</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Avoid arguments before sleep</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Avoid caffeine & alcohol before sleep</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Avoid TV, computers, phone screens 1 hour before sleep</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Reduce my pain</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Improve my mood</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Increase my energy</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Reduce my stress</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>⑨ <input type="checkbox"/> Current level of “fun” in my life</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Intentionally smile (1 minute)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Play a musical instrument</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Listen to music daily</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Go out with family or a friend</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dance for a few minutes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hold door open for strangers</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Reduce my pain</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Improve my mood</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Increase my energy</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Reduce my stress</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>⑩ <input type="checkbox"/> Detailed life goals and plans set</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Write down my 5-year plan</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Write down my 1-year plan</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Write down my 3-month plan</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Increase my motivation to follow-through with everything written above</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Improve my mood</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>

10. Write down a plan. The brain is amazing; it will not do anything unless it has a purpose. If it has a clear purpose and a goal it will do everything to achieve it. Grab a piece of paper now and write down what you would ideally like to be able to do in 3 months, one year and five years from now. Sorry, being pain-free cannot be a goal. Without clear and exciting goals, your brain will find it hard to get motivated to do anything including just getting out of bed. Go ahead, write down on a piece of paper all the things that you would like to achieve and look forward to achieving in your career, physical health, and socially. Then break the goals down to smaller bits with a timeline to do them. This is a key factor in your recovery.



Write down below your 3 month, one year and 5 year plans. Identifying them is the most important step. This is an essential exercise. **A brain without purpose has no reason to change.**



My one inspirational & exciting goal for the next 5 years is...

My one exciting goal to achieve for the upcoming one year is...

My three small goals to achieve in the upcoming 3 months are...

Physical health goal:

Family / Social goal:

Career / work goal:

In summary, considering how complex persistent pain is, are you surprised that the treatment options outlined here have been relatively uncomplicated? Did you notice that none of the options for making you feel better involved “purchasing” anything ...no lotions, and no fancy gadgets? Please don’t get misled by the relative simplicity of the advice given in this video. The information is based on hundreds of books and medical studies.

In my 25 years of experience as a physical therapist having seen thousands of patients, I’ve noticed that when my patients’ life stress levels decrease, most often their pain levels also decrease and sometimes their pain even disappears. However, when stress levels, lack of physical activity, poor diet and lack of life enjoyment persist, pain rarely changes.

Let’s do an experiment. Grab a small object, anything like a water bottle or your cell phone. Now pretend whatever you are holding, is a small rock that you are carrying in your hand. How heavy is this small rock? ...certainly less than 1 pound.



The weight of the rock does not matter; it depends on how long you hold it for. If you hold it for a few minutes it is not a problem. If you hold it for a few hours, you’ll have an ache in your arm. If you hold it for days, weeks or months, your arm will feel numb and paralyzed.



In each case, the weight of the rock doesn't change, but the longer you hold it, the heavier it becomes.

The stresses and worries in life and over your pain are like that small rock. Think about them for a while and nothing happens. Think about them a little longer, they begin to hurt. And if you think about them all day long for weeks on end you will feel paralyzed and incapable of doing anything.

I strongly recommend that you put your big or small rock down and stop carrying it around everywhere with you.

It is time that you changed your thinking about your pain and chose a different strategy. Instead of only relying on doctors, therapists or medications, realize that **you** have the power to change. Stop striving to end your pain. Stop the constant focus on fighting your pain but accept the pain ...for now. Acceptance doesn't mean that you are giving up; in fact it means the opposite. Acceptance of your pain means that you will no longer allow it to rule you and take over every aspect of your life. Acceptance means that you are putting down the rock and will not allow this temporary pain condition to stop you from once again enjoying life.

I have no time line for you so I can't possibly tell you how long it will take for your pain to improve. I make one promise though, and that is that, once you follow the 10 recommendations I've outlined and once you put down the rock, the quality of your life will improve despite the pain.

You, your family and friends and all those around you will see the new you when you follow the 10 actions I have recommended. I urge you to watch the Pain Truth video series a few more times and read **other** pain education books such as...

Explain Pain. Written by Lorimer Mosely and David Butler, Australian Physiotherapists

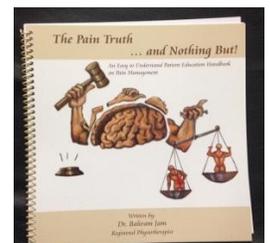
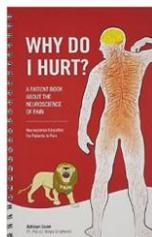
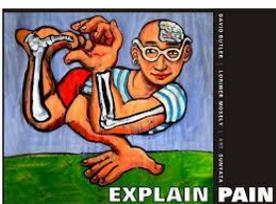
Painful Yarns. Also written by Lorimer Mosely

Why do I Hurt? Written by Adriaan Louw, American Physical Therapist

Understand Pain, Live Well Again. Written by Neil Pearson, Canadian Physiotherapist

The Pain Truth and Nothing But! Written by me and available on www.amazon.ca

This is Bahram Jam and I wish you a safe journey in your well being.



The *Pain Truth* videos & workbook are part of a **6-week program** and it is **absolutely essential** to complete the activities and instructions outlined in *The Pain Truth and Nothing But! Workbook* on a daily basis.

Available on www.amazon.ca

“Knowledge is power but action gets things done!”

You now have the knowledge, so commit yourself to apply the 10 actions into your daily life as instructed in *The Pain Truth and Nothing But! Workbook*.