

Pain: 3-Dimensional Pain Journal

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Why Is A Pain Journal Important?

Self-awareness of the triggers to your pain is the first step to your recovery. Pain is connected to three dimensions. The mechanical dimension is your activities and movements, the emotional dimension is your feelings, and the social dimension is where you are and who is with you. When triggers of your pain are unknown or hard to identify, it is important for you to take an active role in searching the mechanical, social, and emotional dimensions for triggers to your pain. The best method to determine these triggers is to keep a written pain journal. This is like a food journal. It's important for you to be brave and honest when completing the journal. The first step in your bettering is for you to see in written form on paper the trends in certain movements, negative emotions and negativity in social places or with people to allow for coping strategies to be established.

How To Fill Out A Pain Journal?

Identify your worst/intolerable number on the pain scale. Use that level of pain for your journal entries. For example, if your worst pain is a 7/10, anytime your pain is at a 7 you would want to record a journal entry. Each time you make a journal entry, record the mechanical, social and emotional dimensions related to your pain. In addition to journaling your worst/intolerable pain at the moment, it is also helpful to record the three dimensions three hours prior. For example, if your intolerable/worst pain is at 12 noon, then you will also journal the three dimensions three hours prior (9 am – 12 noon). The three dimensions of the journal are mechanical, social, and emotional.

1. Mechanical: What are you doing? This will help you know if you need to move differently or move more or even protect certain directions or positions.
2. Social: Where are you and who are you with? This will help you know if there are social situations that you need to incorporate coping strategies
3. Emotional: How are you feeling? This will help you know if you need to work on applying the strategy of catching and correcting negative emotions.

Journal Entry Example

If your worst pain is a 7, then you are only going to journal when your pain is a 7. For example, if tomorrow you are at the grocery store with your sister and your pain is a 7 then your journal entry would look similar to the below entry. In addition, you would record the three hours prior to going to the grocery store.

Date: June 4, 2016

Time: 12 pm

1. Mechanical: Walking in store
2. Social: Grocery store with my sister
3. Emotional: Discouraged; Sad

Date: June 4, 2016

Time: 9 am – 12 pm

1. Mechanical: Sitting at home on computer
2. Social: Alone
3. Emotional: Upbeat; Happy

How To Review Your Journal

1. Identify trends in your dimensions
 - a. Review each journal entry for similar activities in your mechanical dimension
 - b. Review each journal entry for similar social settings in your social dimension
 - c. Review each journal entry for similar emotions in your emotional dimension
2. Prepare to discuss:
 - a. Similarities in above trends in all dimensions
 - b. Barriers to completing your journal
 - c. Effective coping strategies for identified triggers. If difficulty with establishing coping strategies occurs, you could consider journaling when your pain is at its best time in order to help identify strategies for coping. Focusing when pain is at its best may identify coping strategies for the mechanical, emotional, and social dimensions.

On the following pages, the first page is used as a reference for recording the three dimensions. The second page is your journal entry page. You will need multiple copies of this page to complete your journal. It is recommended that you journal for a minimum of 2 weeks in order to best capture all of your activities that would occur in a month. However, any length of a journal can yield valuable information. Enjoy the opportunity to take an active role in understanding your pain and how to improve your coping. Consult with your physical or occupational therapist on any specific questions.







3-Dimensional Pain Journal:

Instructions: Identify your worst/intolerable number on the pain scale. Use that level of pain for your journal entries. For example, if your worst pain is a 7/10, anytime your pain is at a 7 you would want to record a journal entry. Each time you make a journal entry, record the mechanical, social and emotional dimensions related to your pain. In addition to journaling your worst/intolerable pain at the moment, it is also helpful to record the three dimensions three hours prior. For example, if your intolerable/worst pain is at 12 noon, then you will also journal the three dimensions three hours prior (9 am – 12 noon). The three dimensions of the journal are mechanical, social, and emotional.

1. **Mechanically**—What are you doing?
Example: Sitting, standing, walking, doing stairs, etc

2. **Socially**—Where are you? Who are you with?
Example: At grocery store with my sister

3. **Emotionally**—How are you feeling?
Example: Excited, Tender, Scared, Angry, Use the following descriptions below

HAPPY	EXCITED	TENDER	SCARED	ANGRY	SAD
Delighted Elated Jolly Complete Satisfied Optimistic Pleased Upbeat	Aroused Nervous Thrilled Spirited Chipper Enthusiastic Frenzied Antsy	Affectionate Loving Compassionate Warmhearted Kind Sensitive Congenial Sympathetic	Worried Nervous Frightened Apprehensive Horrorified Anxious Jittery Intimidated	Uptight Hot-tempered Bitter Infuriated Mad Irritated Outraged Resentful	Discouraged Depressed Dissatisfied Down Heartbroken Dejected Troubled Blue
					

Journal Entry Page

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

PAIN: At its worst? At its best?

MECHANICAL: _____

SOCIAL: WHERE ARE YOU _____

WHO ARE YOU WITH _____

EMOTIONAL: happy/ excited / sad / angry / scared / tender

WHAT WERE YOU DOING 3 HOURS BEFORE?

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

PAIN: At its worst? At its best?

MECHANICAL: _____

SOCIAL: WHERE ARE YOU _____

WHO ARE YOU WITH _____

EMOTIONAL: happy/ excited / sad / angry / scared / tender

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

PAIN: At its worst? At its best?

MECHANICAL: _____

SOCIAL: WHERE ARE YOU _____

WHO ARE YOU WITH _____

EMOTIONAL: happy/ excited / sad / angry / scared / tender

WHAT WERE YOU DOING 3 HOURS BEFORE?

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

PAIN: At its worst? At its best?

MECHANICAL: _____

SOCIAL: WHERE ARE YOU _____

WHO ARE YOU WITH _____

EMOTIONAL: happy/ excited / sad / angry / scared / tender