

Let's Talk About Pain

Think of your pain with a broader scope.

- Pain is actually pretty complex! Taking a biopsychosocial perspective, how we feel pain is influenced by many things such as our emotion, mood, diet, sleep (or lack of!), stress level, social support, beliefs, MRI or x-ray results.
- Tissue damage does not have to be present for pain to be felt.

Our brain is constantly gauging whether we are in danger or if we are safe.

- The brain is constantly receiving information from our internal and external environment. With all of these messages, the brain concludes if you are in danger or if you're safe. If your brain concludes that it is in danger, pain is more easily detected.
- DIMS (danger in me): What cues in your environment could be considered a danger message? This may include things like a stressful job or home, being in the same setting as when the injury occurred, talking about your injury with someone else, fear that something is wrong, etc. It's as if you've been running from a tiger for 6 months straight!
- SIMS (safety in me): What cues in your environment could be considered a safety message? This may include positive affirmations, time spent with people you love, laughing, exercise, support, the right health care providers, etc.

Inflammation increases the likelihood that you will feel pain.

- Inflammation ramps up the firing rate of the neural pathways in our body.
- Sources of inflammation include stress, poor diet (sugar, gluten, alcohol, lactose, fried foods), a virus such as a cold, allergies
- Opioids and other pain relieving drugs such as Gabapentin are a foreign substance to our body. This triggers the immune system to start fighting, which increases inflammation and eventually causes more pain! This is why the same dose of medication isn't as effective at decreasing pain after prolonged use.

So what can you do?

- Changing your DIMS to SIMS can be extremely powerful and help you understand why you may feel pain in certain situations.
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy has shown to be an effective intervention. Look for a counselor or psychologist in town who uses this method.
- Graded Motor Imagery (ask for more info)
- Eat well! Tart cherry juice concentrate is a great natural anti-inflammatory. Other important nutrients are vitamin D3, omega 3, and magnesium. Please talk to your doctor before considering taking these as a supplement. Luckily, they are found in common foods!
- Sleep well! 8-9 hours of uninterrupted sleep per night.
- Exercise for 30 minutes most days of the week. Think of all the blood flow, nutrients, and promoted healing you are doing for yourself!



Inspire Physical Therapy LLC Δ 2119 West Main Street Δ Richmond, VA 23220
<http://inspirephysicaltherapy.net>