

How to Track Pain for Doctors

Complete guide to what doctors need to see in your pain records — with tracking templates, appointment prep worksheets, and a doctor-ready summary page.

What Doctors Need to See

1. Pain Pattern Over Time

Track at least 7 days before your appointment. Show trends, not just today's pain. Doctors want to see the full picture — good days and bad.

2. Specific Descriptions

Where exactly? What type? (sharp, burning, aching, throbbing). When does it start and stop? What makes it better or worse?

3. Functional Impact

"I couldn't cook dinner 4 days this week" is more useful than "my pain was 8/10." Describe what pain prevents you from doing.

4. Medication Response

What you took, when, how much it helped (percentage or time), and any side effects. This guides treatment decisions.

5. Sleep & Mood Connection

Pain affects sleep and mood. Tracking these helps doctors understand the full burden and consider comprehensive treatment.

6. Trigger Identification

Activities, foods, weather, stress, or sleep that precede pain changes. Patterns emerge after 7+ days of consistent tracking.

7. Treatment History

What you've already tried and how well it worked. This prevents repeating failed treatments and guides next steps.

Doctor vs. Patient Language — Translation Guide

Your doctor thinks in clinical terms. This table shows how to translate your experience into language that drives clinical decisions.

What You Say	What the Doctor Needs to Hear	Why It Matters
"It hurts all the time"	"My baseline is 4/10 with flares to 7-8/10"	Quantifies baseline vs acute
"Nothing helps"	"Ibuprofen reduces pain 20% for 3 hours"	Shows partial response data
"I can't do anything"	"I couldn't cook 4 of 7 days this week"	Specific functional impact
"It's getting worse"	"Average pain increased from 4 to 6 over 3 weeks"	Documented trend with timeline
"The medication doesn't work"	"After 2 weeks on [med], pain unchanged at 5/10"	Treatment trial with duration
"I'm always tired"	"Sleep quality 2/5; woke 4 times from pain"	Sleep-pain connection data

7-Day Pre-Appointment Tracking Log

Complete this for the 7 days before your appointment. Brings structured data your doctor can review in under 2 minutes.

Day	Date	AM Pain (0-10)	PM Pain (0-10)	Worst Moment	Function (what you couldn't do)	Meds Taken	Sleep (1-5)
Mon							
Tue							
Wed							
Thu							
Fri							
Sat							
Sun							

Pre-Appointment Checklist

Complete 1-2 days before your appointment. Bring this page with your 7-day tracking log.

- 7-day pain log completed (above)
- Current medication list with doses and timing
- List of treatments already tried and results
- Imaging / test results to bring or reference
- Insurance / referral paperwork if needed
- Questions written down (below)
- Appointment goals identified

Appointment Information

Appointment date & time: _____

Doctor / Specialist: _____

Referred by: _____

Primary concern for this visit: _____

Changes since last visit: _____

Questions to Ask (prepare 3-5)

During the Appointment — Notes

Write notes during or immediately after. Memory fades fast — capture key decisions, next steps, and new prescriptions.

Diagnosis discussed: _____

New medications prescribed: _____

Dosage changes: _____

Tests ordered: _____

Referrals made: _____

Next appointment: _____

Doctor's Recommendations

Questions I Still Have

Post-Appointment Action Items

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Medication & Treatment Log

Doctors need to see what you take, when, and whether it works. Include OTC meds and supplements — these affect prescribing decisions.

Non-Medication Treatments

Track non-drug interventions: physio, heat/cold, TENS, stretching. Doctors use this to judge what to try next.

Treatment Effectiveness Summary

At week end, rate each treatment: 1 = No help, 2 = Slight, 3 = Moderate, 4 = Good, 5 = Excellent.

Weekly Summary — Pain Tracking for Doctors

Complete at end of each week. Bring to appointments. This page tells your doctor how the week went.

Week of: _____

Average Pain Level (0-10): _____

Worst Day (date + level): _____

Best Day (date + level): _____

Flare Days This Week: _____

Sleep Quality Average (1-5): _____

Appointments this month: _____

Communication quality (1-5): _____

Pattern Observations

What I want the doctor to focus on: _____

Changes since last visit: _____

What helped/did not help: _____

New symptoms to report: _____

Questions for Next Appointment

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Pre-Appointment Notes & Priority Concerns
