

How is this different to MSK or musculoskeletal physiotherapy?

We use a 'hands off' approach to persistent pain. This involves the physiotherapists teaching you and working with you to determine how to best manage your pain rather than using rigorous exercise, massage or manipulation.

We use a cognitive behavioural approach to help you understand how your thoughts and behaviours can impact on and change your pain.

We may involve other team members such as Pain Management Consultant, Psychologist or Occupational Therapist to help address your needs.

Should it hurt to do my exercises?

Some muscular aches as you return to increasing activity would be considered normal.

We do not encourage people to 'push through' their pain.

Instead, we help people to find manageable amounts of exercise they can do on a daily basis. We find getting consistency with your exercises can be helpful and we help people to find the right level of exercises for them.

Useful resources

www.paintoolkit.org

www.paincd.org.uk/listen

www.bodyinmind.org

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Please contact us if you need general information or advice about Trust services.

www.bartshealth.nhs.uk/pals

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Patient information

Physiotherapy within the Persistent Pain Service

Persistent Pain Service
0207 377 7872



What is persistent pain?

Persistent pain is pain which continues for longer than three months or after your body has healed.

Persistent pain is complex and can impact onto daily activities and can affect people's mood. Persistent pain can lead to reduced independence, poorer quality of life, reduced socialising and decreased activity levels.

What is persistent pain physiotherapy?

Physiotherapy aims to improve exercise tolerance and aid returning to enjoying activities again. When people have pain they can often become fearful of aggravating their pain through different movements or activities. Physiotherapy can help to reduce fear of movement and gradually build up fitness and flexibility again.

We cannot provide a 'cure' for pain or focus on pain reduction. We instead focus on coping better with pain and increasing activity levels.

What might the treatment involve?

- **Education** – gaining a better understanding of your pain or condition.
- **Exercises** – learning to move in a manageable way which does not increase your pain. This could be walking, stretches, strengthening, balance or breathing exercises.
- **Pacing and activity management** – getting control back through understanding manageable activity levels and how to spread these out
- **Graded return to activity** – how to gradually increase or return to activities or exercises
- **Flare up management** – learning how to deal with increases in pain and set-backs. Developing a management plan
- **Relaxation** – This may be breathing or guided imagery
- **Sleep hygiene** – getting into good habits to aid sleep
- **Postural re-education** – how to use good posture for different positions or tasks