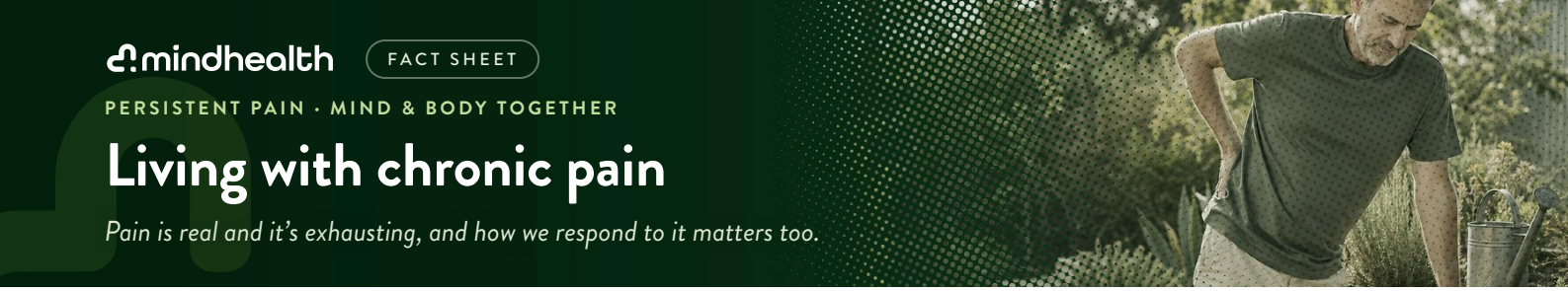
mindhealth FACT SHEET

PERSISTENT PAIN · MIND & BODY TOGETHER

Living with chronic pain

Pain is real and it's exhausting, and how we respond to it matters too.



The pain
Persistent, beyond healing time

The mood toll
Low mood, worry, frustration

The activity trap
Boom-and-bust cycles

01 When pain persists

Chronic pain is pain that continues beyond the normal healing time, often for months or years. It's genuinely real, and over time the nervous system can turn more sensitive, so the pain "volume" stays up even when there's no new damage. This doesn't mean it's "in your head"; it means brain and body are both part of the picture, which is also why psychological support can help alongside medical care.

02 Boom, bust, and pacing

On good days it's tempting to do everything; the payback is often days of flare and rest. This boom-and-bust pattern shrinks what you can do over time and feeds low mood. Pacing (steady, planned activity within your limits rather than pushing to the pain) helps you do more overall with fewer crashes. The aim isn't to ignore pain but to live well alongside it.

03 What genuinely helps

- Pacing activity, rather than boom-and-bust
- A GP or pain specialist guiding the medical side
- Psychological therapy (CBT or ACT) for the load it carries
- Gentle, graded movement within your limits
- Protecting sleep, mood and the things you value

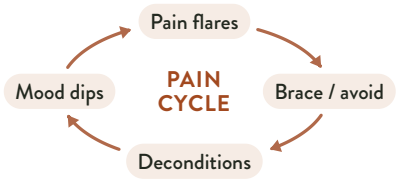
A PRACTICAL STORY

From pushing through to pacing what matters



THE CYCLE

The pain–activity trap



Overdoing then crashing shrinks your world and lifts the pain's volume. Pacing steadies it.

PRACTICAL TOOLKIT

Pace, don't crash

1. Work to a plan, not to the pain
2. Break tasks into steadier chunks
3. Rest before you have to, not after

Consistency beats big pushes.

WHEN TO SEEK HELP

If pain is wearing down your mood, sleep or daily life, psychological support alongside your medical care can help. Ask your GP about a Mental Health Treatment Plan.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1965 Ronald Melzack and Patrick Wall proposed the gate control theory: pain signals can be turned up or down on their way to the brain.

Melzack & Wall, Science, 1965

THE KEY TAKEAWAY

You are not your pain, and managing it isn't giving in. It's taking back the parts of life that matter.

Need support right now? Lifeline **13 11 14** · Emergency **000** — available 24/7. More options: **mindhealth.com.au/urgent-help**

TALK TO US WHEN YOU'RE READY

Parramatta and online, Australia-wide · **Book at mindhealth.com.au**

1300 084 200

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