

PAIN CONTROL MODALITIES (PCM'S):

Pain Control Modalities (PCM's) are specific tools to help manage your pain. They include moist heat, cold packs, ice massage, self-massage (with or without tennis balls). PCM's work best when they are utilized on a regular basis and when you do not wait until the pain gets severe to use them. It is generally recommended to use heat/ice at least 3x/day. The best way to achieve this is to incorporate them into your daily activities. For example, use a hot/cold pack during each meal, ice massage every night before bed, etc. It is especially important to find ways to use PCM's outside in the community so you don't need to be at home to be able to make yourself more comfortable.

Below is a list of suggestions of how to use PCM's while you are in the community.

SUPERFICIAL HEATING MAY RELIEVE PAIN BECAUSE OF THE FOLLOWING:

1. Reduce skeletal muscle spasms possibly by increasing blood flow or by reducing muscle trigger points (knots of tissue).
2. Assists in resolution of superficial, localized infections or inflammations, partly by increased blood flow.
3. Reduced sensitivity to pain (psychological basis unknown).
4. Reduces joint stiffness.
5. Relaxes smooth muscle tissue as found in the gastrointestinal system thereby promoting relaxation and ease of digestion.
6. Dilates (opens blood vessels to increase circulation to the skin).

SUPERFICIAL COOLING MAY RELIEVE PAIN BECAUSE OF THE FOLLOWING:

1. When the cold penetrates deep enough to lower the muscle temperature, it reduces muscle spasm by reducing the muscle contraction response or inactivating trigger points (knots) in muscles.
2. Reduced or prevents bleeding and edema (swelling).
3. Reduces sensitivity of the skin by cooling and delaying transmission of pain signals from the brain.
4. Releases natural pain killers from the brain (endorphins and enkephalins) when ice massage is utilized.