

# Non-Medication Treatments for Pain: Patient Information

- Opioids are not the first-line or routine therapy for chronic pain.
- Non-medication and non-opioid treatments are preferred for chronic pain.
- If opioids are used, they should be combined with non-medication and non-opioid treatment plans, as appropriate.

## Non-Medication Treatments *(Treatment plans that do not involve drugs)*

Interventions are not listed in any particular order. Most patients will try several treatments to find the one(s) that work best for them.

Non-Medication Treatments	Types of Pain Treated	Description
<b>Yoga</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Low-back pain and neck pain</li><li>• Osteoarthritis</li><li>• Arthritis</li><li>• Fibromyalgia</li><li>• Carpal tunnel syndrome</li><li>• Headaches</li></ul>	A physical, mental, and spiritual exercise for meditation, stretching, and strengthening muscles.
<b>Cognitive-behavioral Therapy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Migraines</li><li>• Fibromyalgia</li><li>• Chronic low-back pain</li><li>• Pain in children and adolescents with chronic headaches or other types of chronic pain</li></ul>	A type of talk therapy to help you change negative thoughts and learn how to better manage stress or pain.
<b>Massage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chronic low-back pain</li><li>• Chronic neck pain</li><li>• Pain due to osteoarthritis of the knee</li><li>• Fibromyalgia</li><li>• Headaches</li><li>• Post-operative pain</li></ul>	The rubbing and kneading of muscles and soft tissues with the hands, shown to reduce stress, pain, and muscle tension.
<b>Relaxation Techniques</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• General pain</li><li>• Chronic headaches</li><li>• Chronic pain in children and adolescents</li></ul>	Techniques to refocus your attention on something calming and increase awareness of your body, rather than focusing on pain. These techniques — like visualization and progressive muscle relaxation — slow breathing and lower blood pressure to increase feelings of well-being.
<b>Acupuncture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Types of pain that are often chronic: low-back pain, neck pain, osteoarthritis/knee pain</li><li>• Tension headaches</li><li>• Migraines</li><li>• Post-surgical pain</li></ul>	The practice of pricking the skin with very thin needles at strategic points to alleviate pain and to treat various physical, mental, and emotional conditions.
<b>Mindfulness-based stress reduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chronic low-back pain</li></ul>	An eight-week evidence-based program that offers non-religious, intensive mindfulness training to assist people with stress, anxiety, depression, and pain.
<b>Tai Chi and Qi Gong</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Back pain and pain from knee osteoarthritis</li><li>• May ease fibromyalgia pain</li><li>• May reduce chronic neck pain, but study results are mixed</li></ul>	Mind and body practices that involve certain postures and gentle movements with mental focus, breathing, and relaxation.

### References

- 1 CDC. Alternative Treatments Fact Sheet. [https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/nonopioid\\_treatments-a.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/nonopioid_treatments-a.pdf). CDC.
- 2 Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain — United States, 2016. CDC; 2016. [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/rr/rr6501e1.htm?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/rr/rr6501e1er.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/rr/rr6501e1.htm?CDC_AA_refVal=https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/rr/rr6501e1er.htm).