



Trying *Mind-Body* Medicine for Pain

Mind-body therapies can be great resources for treating pain and are safe for most people in most situations. If the treatment or activity you choose involves a health care professional, make sure they are trained and certified. Most post their qualifications on their websites, but don't be afraid to ask.

If you try something that's not a match, there are other options. Like physical exercise, the "mental exercise" provided by mind-body practices comes in many varieties. If the therapy involves physical activity, such as tai chi, please check with your regular doctor or health care provider before starting.

Here's a graphic to help you figure out which mind-body therapies might be right for you.

I'd like to	Mind-body options to try	What to know first	Can I do while I'm on "stay home" orders?
<p>Know right away if what I'm doing is working.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biofeedback to monitor your heart rate or track how relaxed your muscles are. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may need to buy a device or download an app. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, if you order a device from HeartMath or another company.
<p>Talk to a human being Learn if my feelings/responses are helpful/healthy.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cognitive behavioral therapy. Biofeedback or progressive muscle relaxation with professional coaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insurance plans pay for mental health care such as CBT. Check if insurance plan covers biofeedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try CBT through BetterHelp.com or Online-Therapy.com. Or find a therapist in your area.
<p>See if hypnosis works I've always been curious.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hypnosis with a therapist. Self-hypnosis with an app or podcast. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A licensed hypnotist cannot make you do anything you would not normally be OK with doing. Never use an app or recording while driving, exercising or using power equipment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can find a therapist who offers hypnosis online, or use an app such as Uncommon Knowledge.
<p>Relax I'm stressed all the time, and my pain makes me even more anxious.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meditation with an app or video. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are different ways to meditate—walking meditation or moving meditation. You can do it no matter what faith you practice, and you do not need to practice a faith at all for meditation to help. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apps such as Calm and Headspace can teach you to meditate at home. Free videos are also available on YouTube and other channels.
<p>Try meditation but I'm not religious. Is there a non-spiritual kind?</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progressive muscle relaxation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn to fully relax by tensing your muscles first. Some experts say this is best learned from a coach, but there are many programs available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch my Breathing Healing Mediation video.
<p>Improve my fitness while I'm reducing pain.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tai chi. Helps with balance, arthritis pain and other physical problems. Yoga. Extensive research shows the pain and stress-relieving powers. Qi gong. It is based on the principle of moving energy more easily through the body. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You probably need to find a class or group near you, at least when you are starting out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free videos online and DVDs are available for purchase. Some studios and gyms may be streaming classes. Here is a popular online yoga class for beginners.



If you like to be active

Moving meditations, such as tai chi, yoga and qi gong.



If you like immediate feedback and data

Biofeedback. A sensor or app gives you information on how you're doing, and a physical therapist can help you interpret what you are hearing or seeing.



If you like being quiet

Classic seated meditation, guided imagery, or progressive muscle relaxation. All these can be done alone in a quiet space.



If you're looking for a therapist or other caring practitioner

Cognitive behavioral therapy with a therapist or hypnosis with a certified hypnotherapist. If you also want to be active, try a tai chi, yoga or qi gong class or group. Some physical therapists provide biofeedback training and coaching.



If you prefer to be with others

Tai chi, yoga and qi gong are often practiced in groups, and you can talk after the class or session. If you want to work with just one person, a cognitive behavioral therapist, hypnotherapist or physical therapist practicing biofeedback might be for you.

Note: during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, being together in person isn't possible for many of us. But you can try these with your family members or roommates as a way to relieve stress and possibly laugh at yourselves as you learn new moves and poses – laughter is a great stress and pain reliever, too.

Two mind-body practices I'd like to try:

1

2

Learn more about different mind-body practices

Biofeedback

- Association for Applied Psychotherapy and Biofeedback, [Find a Practitioner](#)
- HeartMath® tools available to the public include the [emWave2](#), a portable, hand-held device that can be connected to a personal computer, and the [Inner Balance™ Trainer](#), a sensor with an app (Android and Apple) that helps you increase heart coherence, rewards you for progress and includes guided stress management practices.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

- Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, [Find a CBT Therapist](#)
- Psychology Today, [Find a Cognitive Behavioral \(CBT\) Therapist](#)

Guided Imagery

- [Health Journeys](#)

Hypnosis

- American Society of Clinical Hypnosis, [Find a Member](#)
- Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis, [Members](#)
- Uncommon Knowledge app for Apple and Android

Meditation and mindfulness

- [Free meditation tracks](#)
- Meditation and mindfulness: Several online centers and courses. You can even do your own training program free online at <http://palousemindfulness.com>
- International Mindfulness Teachers Association, [Teacher Directory](#)

Progressive muscle relaxation

- [A guide to the practice](#) from the University of Michigan.

Qigong

- [Qigong Institute, Directory of Qigong Teachers and Therapists](#)
- [Institute of Integral Qigong and Tai Chi](#)
- [National Qigong Association](#)

Tai Chi

- [Tai Chi for Health Institute](#)
- [Supreme Chi Living](#)
- [Tai Chi Foundation](#)

Yoga

- [Yoga for back pain from Yoga with Adriene](#)
- [Yoga, meditation and Pilates from Glo.com](#)
- [Yoga for Beginners video from Yoga Journal](#)
- Many apps for Apple and Android, including 5 Minute Yoga and Simply Yoga