25.3 Million adults suffer from chronic pain in the United States. Chronic pain is one of the most debilitating physical problems a person can experience. It can create problems in relationships with others, at work, and distressing thoughts and feelings.

But There's Hope!

Increasing awareness of coping techniques can help decrease the influence of pain on functioning and improve overall quality of life.
Coping with Chronic Pain

Chronic pain is pain that lasts six months or longer. It can develop after an injury, accident, surgery, or an illness.

Chronic pain affects the way we think, feel, and act. Sometimes, our negative pain-related thoughts and emotions can lead to experiencing anger and symptoms of depression and anxiety. We may also limit our physical activity in response to pain flare-ups.

However, there are effective coping skills you can use to improve your everyday pain experience.

- Coping strategies are usually either active or passive.


- Active coping strategies for chronic pain: staying active, ignoring the pain, and attempting to go on with daily life with as little change as possible.

- Passive coping is related to more pain and depression, less self-efficacy and acceptance of illness, and less psychological well-being. Active coping produces the opposite results respectively.

- So, passive coping tends to be less effective than active coping, and it is possibly detrimental to your emotional and physical health.

Self-efficacy in relation to chronic pain is the personal belief that one can manage and overcome the pain despite barriers and negative experiences.

Greater self-efficacy often leads to more engagement in active coping strategies and more positive thoughts.

Greater self-efficacy also has an impact on emotional health, as lower self-efficacy can increase the risk of depression. Consulting a professional can help decrease pain severity and improve mood to enhance your quality of life.

The material provided in this brochure is based on scientific research by psychologists and other health care professionals. For references, contributor information, and additional reading on this topic, please go to the Heads Up Kentucky! website at www.headsupkentucky.org.