



MINDBODY HEALING TIPS

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by

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The Purpose of this Book

This short eBook is a guide to help you assess which areas of mindbody healing might be useful for you to focus on.

It includes an assessment tool, and various suggestions for activities or practices that you might like to incorporate into your own healing journey.

Disclaimer: It is always a good idea to see a doctor in order to rule out any serious physical causes that may require treatment, such as: fractures, infections, cancer, and auto-immune diseases.

A Mindbody Assessment Tool

This is designed to help you measure where you currently are in certain key areas that relate to mindbody health. You can use this tool to track your progress if you wish. Sometimes it's hard to see how far you've come, especially if you are very focused on your symptoms. But making even small amounts of progress in the areas listed here will contribute to your overall wellness, and will eventually lead to a reduction in symptoms.

Rate where you currently fall on a scale of 0-10 for the areas listed below (zero is at the centre and 10 is on the outside edge).

Mark your score on a wheel, like this one below. There is a printable version of this that you can download from the Files section in [my Facebook Group](#).



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Education and Belief

How well do you understand what causes chronic pain and other mindbody symptoms? Do you know what you need to do in order to recover?

Do you believe that you are dealing with a mindbody issue rather than a physical problem?

Emotional Awareness

1. Emotional discovery: Have you explored your past, and considered how it might be creating chronic stress and symptoms?

2. Feeling your feelings: Do you find it easy to recognise and feel your emotions as they

arise?

(you can split this segment and score the two elements separately if you wish)

Soothing

Can you relax? Do you know how to soothe your nervous system? Do you practise this on a daily basis?

Movement/Exercise

Are you able to move without fearing your symptoms? Have you created a regular habit of exercise?

Internal Stress

Are you aware of personality traits and negative beliefs/thoughts that cause you stress? (e.g. inner critic, people pleasing etc). Can you reframe negative self-talk and show yourself self-compassion?

Empowerment

Are you able to say no? Do you set and maintain boundaries with people in your life? Can you speak up for yourself?

Mindset

Can you separate from your symptoms and not fear them or get angry with them? Are you able to practise acceptance/patience? If you notice symptoms, do you remember to focus on psychological rather than physical causes?

Joy and Connection

Do you have things in your life that bring you joy? Do you have close, authentic connections with other people?

How did you score?

The ideal is to achieve balance e.g. 5+ for all. You don't need to get 10/10 in all of them. Low scores can be a useful guide to healing, showing you where it may be helpful to focus your attention.

Read on for some suggestions for things you can do to help strengthen your score in each area.

Education and Belief

When you begin to understand the process that creates and perpetuates symptoms, it's easier to believe that your symptoms (although they are very real) are not due to a problem in your tissues, but are being created by your brain as a danger signal for psychological reasons, not physical ones.

This helps to break the pain-fear cycle, which is a vital part of recovery.

However I'm adding a cautionary note here to say that some people get overly focused on this section, and that can actually become a block to healing. Learn the basics, and then focus on the other parts of the wheel. You don't need a masters in pain science to be able to heal!

There are a multitude of ways to learn more about mindbody syndrome (also known as TMS). Here are a few of my top recommendations:

Books

Unlearn Your Pain by Dr Howard Schubiner

Chronic Pain: Your Key to Recovery by Georgie Oldfield

The Meaning of Truth by Nicole Sachs

The Way Out by Alan Gordon and Alon Ziv

Podcasts

Like Mind Like Body

The Cure for Chronic Pain with Nicole Sachs LCSW

The Mind and Fitness Podcast

YouTube

Pain Free You by Dan Buglio

Healing Chronic Pain: The Pain PT

Crushing Doubt with Dan Ratner

Websites

[My TMS Journey](#)

[Caroline Lee Dewey's mind-body kit](#)

Emotional Awareness

Chronic symptoms are being created by your brain as a danger signal for psychological reasons, not physical ones. Chronic suppression of emotions stores them in your body, and your nervous system can view these repressed, unconscious emotions as a threat to your wellbeing.

Pain can be created as a distraction from them, but pain can also be an expression of the pain/grief/rage/fear that you are unknowingly holding in your body.

In order to heal from chronic pain you need to gently excavate some of these emotions, let them be felt, and let them go. This can be done through journalling, through meditation, or through working with a therapist or coach (or all of the above).

In addition to exploring the past, you also need to learn to feel your emotions in the present. If you have a habit of suppressing them, it can take time to change this pattern but it's possible. Meditation and mindfulness can help you to tune into your body and notice the clues about what you're feeling. When you feel physical symptoms, stop and ask yourself: What emotion am I feeling right now? What emotion might be hiding beneath the surface and creating physical pain or other symptoms?

I recommend the [SIRPA Emotional Awareness Exercise](#) on YouTube for help with this. I use this technique on myself, and with my clients, and it's very helpful for recognising emotions in the body.

Self-Soothing

Address your stress!

This is a crucial part of healing from chronic pain and stress illness.

Chronic stress causes your issues, so to reverse them you need to address the stress. This is often a first step in healing because until you learn to soothe your nervous system and get it out of fight or flight mode, you will remain stuck in the pain-fear cycle.

There are lots of ways to soothe such as: breathwork, meditation, getting out in nature, cuddling a person you love, stroking a pet, singing, humming, somatic exercises like havening, mindfully doing a hobby you enjoy.

Breathwork

Slow your breathing and try to direct the breath down into your belly rather than high up in your chest. It can be particularly calming to lengthen your exhale (I like to breathe in for 4 and out for 6).

For some people this can feel very challenging at first, especially if you are very anxious or if you are prone to tightness in your chest. If focusing too much on your breathing makes you feel worse instead of better, you can try humming or singing instead. When you sing, you naturally lengthen your exhale so it's a brilliant way of stimulating the parasympathetic response and generating a sense of calm in your mindbody system.

You can also try linking your breath with movement (through gentle yoga for example).

Meditation

This is another favourite tool of mine, but it took me time to learn to love it.

Start with short guided meditations on [Insight Timer](#) (which is a fantastic free app) and build up slowly. If sitting meditation feels impossible to you right now, lie down, or try a walking meditation. Whatever you do, don't be a perfectionist. There is no way you can do meditation wrong. Meditation is a practice, and the most important thing is showing up for yourself and trying it.

Movement/Exercise

Many types of chronic symptoms cause people to fear or avoid certain types of movement or exercise. You may have been misinformed by people whose opinion you trusted, which has led you to believe that certain types of movement might be harmful or dangerous for you.

For the vast majority of people with chronic pain, exercise is safe. Your body is not weak or damaged. Even if you have structural differences that are visible on imaging, these are usually 'normal abnormalities' and would also be seen on the scans of people who are pain free.

Getting back to some sort of movement that you enjoy is a key part of recovery from chronic pain. It helps you break the pain-fear cycle, and it also helps strengthen your body and boost your mood.

Find something that you enjoy, whether it's walking, swimming, yoga, running, or dancing like nobody's watching in your own kitchen (that's one of my favourites).

If you have a lot of anxiety about exercise, then Yoga for the TMS community, run by Dani Fagan, is a fantastic way to ease yourself in gently. She also does loads of relaxing breathwork and meditation, which is perfect for soothing the nervous system and helping to teach your brain that movement is safe.

Internal Stress – Personality Traits

This is one of my favourite sections, because it was the one that I probably knew least about when I started this work and it has been huge for me.

The internal stress part is all about the much-discussed personality traits that are often seen in people who experience chronic pain. In order to heal, it's helpful to recognise those aspects of your personality that create or amplify stress or anxiety. Traits such as perfectionism, self-criticism, people pleasing, putting others' needs before your own, or the inability to set boundaries can all cause a lot of stress that isn't always visible on the outside.

Dealing with this is about becoming aware of those parts of yourself, recognising when they are being activated and influencing your thoughts and actions, and then learning to change your inner dialogue into something softer, kinder, and more compassionate.

Journalling is a great way of exploring these personality traits, and practising mindfulness can help you to notice when you are talking to yourself unkindly or putting a lot of pressure on yourself.

Developing self-compassion is another vital component in reducing internal stress. Check out self-compassion meditations on Insight Timer for help with this.

My personal favourite is [Practicing Gentle Kindness Towards Ourselves](#) by Sarah Blondin.

Empowerment

The theme of empowerment encompasses some ideas from other areas, but I thought it was important enough to have its own section.

Chronic pain or illness leaves individuals feeling powerless. Many people have often been passed around the healthcare system, only to be told they can't find anything wrong with you – or if they can, they tell you it's something you need to learn to live with.

When you discover that mindbody symptoms can be cured, that can be very empowering because it allows you to take control of your own healing, and regain ownership of your body. But it can also be daunting. Because it's down to you to do the work to make it happen. There are no pills to take, or surgery involved, and nobody else can do it for you. Sure, you might want the support of a therapist or coach, but ultimately *you* have the power to change your mindbody system and eliminate your chronic symptoms, and *you* have to do the work required to get that outcome.

Another important part of the empowerment piece is learning to say no, to take care of your own needs, to set boundaries with other people, and to speak up for yourself when necessary. This can be challenging, as it often goes against a lifetime of people pleasing and avoiding confrontation, but once you start to do it, it's lifechanging.

Mindset

This area of healing is all about how you think, and about breaking the pain-fear cycle. The way that pain is generated in the brain is simple:

Sensation + Fear = Pain

If you take away the fear, the volume on the pain will be turned right down.

But fear is not the only factor at play. Pain can also increase in response to anger, resistance, and excessive focus on the symptoms. These can all be interpreted as dangerous by the brain so have the effect of keeping that volume dial turned up to the max.

Some tips for helping with mindset

Think about the possible psychological reasons for them rather than going to the physical. Ask yourself: *What's on my mind? What am I not letting myself feel? What was I doing/saying/thinking about when this symptom increased/began?*

Try to cultivate acceptance of your symptoms in the present moment. Fighting them or freaking out will only ever make them worse.

Try to avoid focusing on your pain. Change the words you use when you talk about it, use a code word like bananas or noodles instead of pain, or a more neutral word like symptoms or sensations. Better still try not to talk about it at all.

Use positive affirmations and self-talk to reassure yourself. For example: *I am safe. This will pass. This is only a sensation.*

Recognise that your symptoms are trying to keep you safe. Try not to get frustrated with them. Think of them as a scared animal that will respond to gentle patient care rather than your anger and frustration.

Joy and Connection

An often-neglected part of healing that is really important, is finding ways to cultivate more joy and connection in your life. The goal of this section is to shift your focus away from your symptoms and onto living your life.

Connection can be about your relationships with others, but it can also be about your connection to spirituality or to anything greater than yourself, such as nature.

As you work to heal your childhood wounds, you can reconnect with those young parts of yourself who have the ability to experience life in the moment. When you look at the world through the eyes of your inner child you can find joy, fun and wonder all around you that was previously going unnoticed.

Suggestions for this section

Indulge in hobbies you might have been neglecting. If you don't have hobbies, now's a great time to find some. What hobbies did you enjoy as a child that you might be able to reintroduce?

Get out in nature. Take your shoes off and feel the earth beneath your feet.

Play with your pets if you have them.

Make plans with friends who you feel able to be authentic around. Laugh. Be silly. Dare to be imperfect.

Create in whatever way is fun for you. Make music, sing in the shower, draw, paint, build things, fix things, knit, write. Everyone is creative, don't let fear of failure or not being 'good enough' stop you. Do it for the fun of it.

Become a joy hunter - seek joy out in your life!

(Some of my favourite things are climbing trees, wild swimming, playing with my dog, making music and singing)

About me



I'm a life coach and registered SIRPA Practitioner. I specialise in health and wellbeing, and I have a particular interest in the mindbody connection and in helping clients heal from chronic pain and other stress-related symptoms.

[My website](#)

[My Instagram](#)

[My Facebook page](#)

[My Mindbody Wellness Facebook group](#)