



AVOIDANCE VS.

PERSISTENCE

COPING

Are They Helpful Strategies?

INSIDE:

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- ✓ Patient Success Stories

*Can we help you
with your pain?*

Give us a call at
616-537-2864
to book your appointment!



When dealing with a painful situation there are a number of strategies that most people will take in order to reduce their pain and get back to full function. Two of the primary strategies are **avoidance coping** and **persistence coping**. There are times where these strategies can be very helpful, but they also have their drawbacks.

Avoidance coping is a strategy where an activity that causes soreness/pain is taken away, usually to allow some rest for the painful area. For example, after an ankle sprain, avoiding jumping/running, or maybe transitioning to using crutches to move around. These are both an example of avoidance coping.

For a time, this is a healthy strategy to allow healing to happen or to give the painful area a time to rest from what may be aggravating it. The beauty of this strategy is that sometimes it works! The downside of this strategy, especially in circumstances where pain in an area has lasted for weeks or even months, is that the area can become stiff/weak, or sometimes even more painful.

This strategy also means something functionally important might have to be put aside for an indefinite period of time.

Let's use lifting for example. If someone has had issues with on/off back pain for years and has been avoiding lifting whenever possible because it can at times be painful, this activity can become increasingly difficult. Muscles responsible for lifting can become de-conditioned, joint motion needed for lifting can become stiff, and nerves responsible for controlling lifting can

get out of practice. This can create a cycle where lifting becomes more and more difficult. In this example, avoidance coping, which may have been helpful in the short term, poses some long term risks and does not improve one's ability to function.

On the other end of the spectrum, there is the strategy of **persistence coping**. This is a strategy that is based on the thought process of "I'm just going to push through this. No pain no gain." Amazingly, for short term issues, sometimes this works too. If I strain my shoulder and it hurts to reach overhead, sometimes if I gently push through and keep moving it overhead despite some soreness, over time it loosens up and I get over my issue.

There are, however, times where it is not beneficial. Back to the lifting example... If lifting has been aggravating my back and for weeks or months I continue to lift in the same way, irritating and re-irritating my back, there is a good chance it is not helping the situation. In this example, persistence coping is not helping with one's ability to function and is not reducing pain.





With body areas that are in pain for relatively long periods of time, many will shift between periods of avoidance coping and periods of persistence coping, yoyo-ing between rest and over-work. I'd like to take this opportunity to provide two other coping strategies to help manage long term issues. They also happen to be strategies that are often employed by physical therapists with the goal of helping you manage your pain and improve your function. These two strategies are **gradual exposure** and **activity pacing**.

Gradual exposure is a strategy where the activity that has been causing pain is re-introduced slowly, but surely, to allow your body to adapt to it. This strategy tends to work very well for individuals who have been avoiding certain tasks due to pain. To use our lifting example once again (assuming one has been avoiding lifting due to back pain), the specific requirements of lifting would be broken down into component parts. First, an improved ability to bend forward would be needed. This might mean working on general mobility, stretching, or maybe even some strengthening/balance to get to this position. Once this is achieved, picking up light weight

the weight would increase and the reps might also increase depending on your specific goal. Variables such as different types of items or even awkward lifting situations would be added into a routine.

The process of gradual exposure takes time, however the end goal would be to be able to lift relatively easily and without pain to achieve better function. Strategies like gradual exposure can be very helpful for reducing pain and giving the body a chance to adapt to the very task it is having a difficult time with.

"If managing a healthy balance between these four outlined strategies was easy, I probably wouldn't have a job."

Activity pacing, like gradual exposure, is an alternative to avoidance or persistence coping. This strategy allows for difficult or painful activities to still be practiced in real life scenarios, but it controls how much of that activity is done or how much rest is given while it is being done.

Let's use the example of back pain while vacuuming. Someone using the strategy of persistence coping would attack the task of vacuuming by getting the job done, pushing until all rooms in the house were completed, even if that means pushing through pain. Someone pacing the activity would listen to their symptoms or their past history with vacuuming and break the house up into sections. This would mean vacuuming 1-2 rooms, temporarily stopping the activity after only mild irritation, or maybe stopping prior to increased symptoms. They would then return to the activity after either some brief rest or after doing another task, and vacuum another 1-2 rooms. This process would be repeated until all the rooms are vacuumed. This allows a job to still get done and ideally, it gets done without a flare-up of pain. Oftentimes a mix between **activity pacing** and **gradual exposure** is the best recipe for getting over a chronic painful issue.

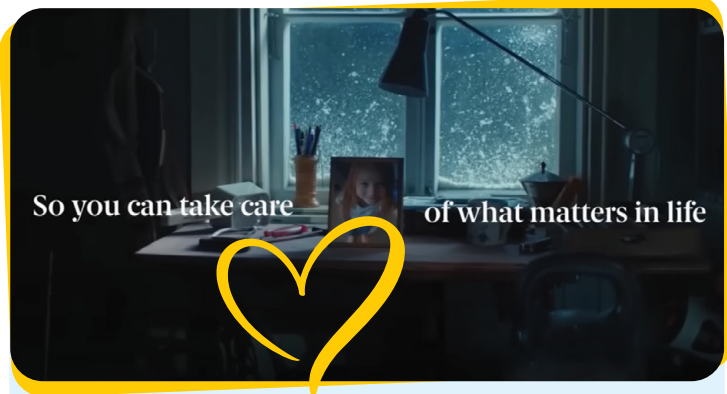
If managing a healthy balance between these four outlined strategies was easy, I probably wouldn't have a job. People would experience painful situations and know exactly when to avoid, when to push, when to wean back into activity, or when to pace out their day. Unfortunately, it is not always simple! If you happen to find yourself in a difficult situation where you are struggling with pain or with getting back to function, and you don't know where to turn next, trying a new strategy can sometimes be helpful.

If you continue to struggle, a physical therapist may be able to evaluate your situation and give you advice. Please consider reaching out for a consultation if you feel we might be able to help you!

Vincent Hanneken, PT/Owner



AN INSPIRING VIDEO



This video was created for all of you who value your importance in your family's lives. To be honest, it pulls a bit on your heart in a very positive way. Life is full of responsibility and the wider the circle of that responsibility the more important we become to our family, community and the world at large.

The core of its message is about fulfilling a purpose and the passion behind that purpose inspired this proud grandparent to push himself to accomplish his goal and, in the process, proved to himself what he is made of.

After you finish it, you too may have a goal to accomplish and the passion to pursue it but lack the know-how to get there because of some physical limitations.

Did you know our passion at Full Potential PT is helping support yours so you can accomplish your goals? Passion reaches beyond the surface of why we are interested in something and digs into the heart of what pumps life into us because it is where we find meaning and so motivation.

And, you know as well as I, when each day has meaning your body has a reason to get out of bed and make a difference. As you will see in the video, strength of purpose can take you where you want to go.

We are here to make a difference in our patient's lives; all you have to do is take the first step and call and let us help you build more life into your future.

Be inspired,
Vincent Hanneken, PT

The unique thing about this video is it sends a powerful message even though it never says a word.

To watch the video just scan the QR code.

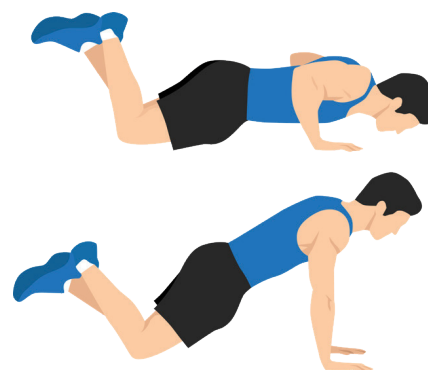


EXERCISE ESSENTIALS

Modified Push Up On Knees

Strengthen Your Core

Start by kneeling on the floor. Walk your hands forward until your wrists are directly under your shoulder. With elbows angled at 45 degrees, slowly lower your body down until your chest is several inches from the floor then push yourself back up until your arms are straight, being sure your body stays in a straight line from knees to head. Repeat 10 times.



Patient Who Found Confidence and Improved Strength!

"I am very pleased with the physical therapy at Full Potential. The staff are happy, friendly, and enjoy their work and people. Dr. Luke has been very professional and knowledgeable, and is helping me get back to being able to do the things I enjoy! Yay! I am amazed how quickly they could target the problem and identify the needed exercises. Reaching my full potential will take some time and work, but it is very encouraging to see that the personal program they created is already having some good results, and it has only been 2 weeks! I highly recommend this practice – my only regret is that I waited a year to get their professional help!"

You too can find confidence and improved strength!

Call 616-537-2864 Today!

**Has your pain come back? We can help! Call us at 616-537-2864 to book your appointment today!
Book online at FullPotentialPT.com**

PATIENT *Success* STORIES



How much have we helped your problem improve?

"100%"

How has your condition improved as a result of physical therapy?

"So much better! I can now stand, walk and function. I was unable to do any of these things before the therapy."

What did you enjoy about your experience and treatment with Full Potential Physical Therapy?

"Kindness of everyone! I always feel like the staff and Jeremy truly want to help and reassure me. I very much appreciate the professionalism and expertise."

— Lynn R.

WE WANT TO HELP YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY!

Sometimes the biggest impediment for people in pain is to know where to get help. You can be a trusted advocate for our services, and give your friends and family the confidence to take the first step towards getting assistance. Your recommendation could be the beginning of good things to come for them!

Simply fill out the form, return to us and we will send them information on how we can help. To submit online, go to <https://fullpotentialpt.com/patient-information/refer-a-friend/>

Your Name

Your Friend's Name

Your Friend's Email



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PEACE & LOVE

Soft tissue injuries are no stranger to most. Whether you've suffered a sprained joint from athletics, strained a muscle from overuse, or gotten bruised in a fall, soft tissue injuries come in many forms, and are especially common in the summer. When it comes to injury management at home, what is the go to? Most people opt for rest, ice, and some pain medication until the tenderness is under control. The acronym "RICE" (Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation) has been the standard advice given in the past. Research is now showing that those methods may be harming more than helping!










So how should you manage an injury at home?
With PEACE and LOVE!

Immediately after an injury, treat the affected area with "PEACE." While it is advised to protect the injured area, activity that does not aggravate the injury should continue. It may seem natural to "stay off" a twisted ankle or a sore knee, but new studies are indicating that prolonged rest can compromise the injured tissue's strength and quality. The damaged tissue should continue to be mobilized (as tolerated) as it goes through the various phases of inflammation to repair itself. Using anti-inflammatories can disrupt this process and prevent the affected tissue from repairing completely. Movement as tolerated is encouraged.

The second step of treating a soft tissue injury is "LOVE," and this approach should guide your gradual path to recovery. This step is built to help you get back to health independently, but should you have questions about your injury, or want assistance with your recovery, a physical therapist is perhaps the most qualified in this area of treatment.

Some of the key differences in this approach vs. previous or common methods are the focus on continuing movement, letting the healing process happen naturally, and the highlight on education during the recovery process.

At Full Potential, we are firm supporters of an active approach to recovery. That's why we offer a FREE Injury Screening for any who may be looking for assistance in the recovery process of a recent or old injury. Consult with a physical therapist and get an expert's opinion on what is needed to keep you safely and confidently participating in the things you love.

- P**  **PROTECTION**
Avoid activities and movements that increase pain during the first few days after injury.
 - E**  **ELEVATION**
Elevate the injured limb higher than the heart as often as possible.
 - A**  **AVOID ANTI-INFLAMMATORIES**
Avoid taking anti-inflammatory medications as they reduce tissue healing.
 - C**  **COMPRESSION**
Use elastic bandage or taping to reduce swelling.
 - E**  **EDUCATION**
Your body knows best. Avoid unnecessary treatments and medical investigations and let nature play its role.
- &**
- L**  **LOAD**
Let pain guide your gradual return to normal activities. Your body will tell you when it's safe to increase load.
 - O**  **OPTIMISM**
Condition your brain for optimal recovery by being confident and positive.
 - V**  **VASCULARISATION**
Choose pain-free cardiovascular activities to increase blood flow to repairing tissues.
 - E**  **EXERCISE**
Restore mobility, strength, and proprioception by adopting an active approach to recovery.

FOR SALE

Mat Exercise Table, black top with oak legs. 18 inches high, 48 inches wide, 78 inches long. Great for doing your exercises. Easy to get on and off, large surface area to maneuver on safely. In good condition and ready to go.
For more information call (616)392-2172

