

# ALTERNATIVE PAIN MANAGEMENT

*There are many avenues of treatment for alternative pain management and they should be considered alongside traditional medical routes. Alternative Pain Management Therapy is a form of treatment that seeks to address the root cause of pain through methods other than conventional medicine.*

*These alternative methods seek to address the cause of pain within the body through mind-body therapies such as acupuncture, yoga, massage therapy, mindful meditation, and tai chi in order to alleviate pain.*

## What are the Side Effects of Opioid Usage for Pain Management?

There are a wide array of side effects and complications that come with opioid usage, these include: cognitive impairment, delirium, incontinence, falls, visual impairment, weight loss, malnutrition, sleep disorders, ulcers, syncope, dehydration, dizziness, frailty, functional decline, neglect and abuse, fatigue, gait disorders, osteopenia, osteoporosis, dementia, and many more. These side effects, when paired with the regular changes of aging, can have serious consequences (Project ECHO, 2020).

## Non-Opioid Alternatives

Acetaminophen  
Topicals: Diclofenac, Capsaicin, Lidocaine  
Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs  
Antidepressants: Duloxetine  
Anticonvulsants

## Scientific Evidence for Alternative Pain Management Strategies

Many studies have been carried out regarding the validity of alternative pain management solutions in comparison to traditional opiate prescriptions and there is significant scientific evidence that supports effectiveness of these methods. When combined with other approaches, these pain management solutions can be just as or more effective than prescription medications at addressing pain (Project ECHO, 2020).

## Resource on Alternative Approaches to Pain Management in Aging Adults

Tauben, D., & Stacey, B. R. (2020, November). Approach to the management of chronic non-cancer pain in adults. <https://www.uptodate.com/contents/approach-to-the-management-of-chronic-non-cancer-pain-in-adults>.

## Integration of Alternative Pain Management Strategies

These alternative pain management strategies encourage patient participation in creating their care plan, and they provide methodologies that result in improvement of pain along with minimal risks to the individual. These treatment styles are more targeted in their approach to addressing pain because they directly incorporate the areas in pain, rather than a systemic approach via opioids (Williams Condie & Swensen, 2020).

## Resource Citations

Condie, Alise Williams; Yaugher, Ashley; Swensen, Kira; and Voss, Maren Wright, "Evidence-Based Alternative Pain Management Techniques for Chronic Pain" (2020).  
<https://www.tragerinstitute.org/project-echo-opioid-risk-management>

## ACUPUNCTURE

Acupuncture is a traditional Chinese pain management method that works to decrease pain and chronic pain through the stimulation of nerves that aid in the release of pain blocking endorphins. This method works, traditionally, as a way of balancing energy flow (qi) within the body through small insertions to rebalance the body.

It works to stimulate the body's internal mechanisms to heal from disease, restore balance to bodily systems, and promote the general health of an individual.

## MINDFUL MEDITATION

Mindfulness is a method of pain management that works to train the mind to focus and redirect thoughts in more beneficial directions.

Mindful meditation reduces stress and therefore diminishes the effects of stress on the body.

Meditation allows for a more comprehensive ability to cope with pain and greater reduces the sensation of pain over time.

## MASSAGE THERAPY

Massage therapy is a method of pain management that uses a hands on method to manipulate the bodies tissues through varying pressures, holds, and movements.

This method of pain reduction uses movement to encourage blood flow which reduces muscular tension and works to improve tissue healing over time. There is support for massage therapy aiding in speed of recovery due to the reduction of tension and increased mobility.

## TAI CHI

Tai chi is a pain management method that works through gentle mind-body motions that encourage focus on breathing, bodily sensations, and relaxed muscles. This method is one that can be easily adapted to people of all bodily abilities.

The goal of tai chi is to encourage the life energy (qi) to flow smoothly and steadily throughout the body in order to create harmony within the bodies systems.

## HERBAL MEDICINE

Herbal medicines are traditional healing methods that stem from cultures throughout the world.

Herbal medicines tend to focus on the mind-body type of an individual (this can refer to elements, doshas, etc.) and works to address needs based off the aspects that are deemed off balance. It seeks to promote the natural healing ways of the body by improving the wellness of the human body and mind by bringing balance to the mind-body type.

## YOGA

Yoga is a pain management approach that works to create a balanced and strong body and mind.

Yoga works to improve balance, flexibility, tone, and build bodily strength which aid in reducing chronic pain and inflammation, while maintaining the functionality of the body as we age. Yoga provides the body an opportunity to rest, relax, and establish a calm state of being that allows for greater awareness of the body.

## Find Professional/Licensed Providers of these Methodologies

*Before scheduling appointments with these providers, it is important to discuss your treatment plan with your primary healthcare provider to find the pain management solution that is best for you*

### American Yoga Association

<https://www.kentuckyyogainitiative.org/impact>

### American Massage Therapy Association

<https://www.amtamassage.org/>

### American Meditation Society

<https://www.americanmeditationsociety.org/programs/classes/>

### Acupuncture Society of America

<https://kyacupuncture.org/practitioner-listing/>

### American Institute of Homeopathy

<https://homeopathyusa.org/member-directory.html>

### Taoist Tai Chi Society of Kentucky

[https://www.taoisttaichi.org/locations/louisville-jim-miller-hall/#nearby\\_locations\\_list](https://www.taoisttaichi.org/locations/louisville-jim-miller-hall/#nearby_locations_list)