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TIPS FOR MANAGING CHRONIC PAIN

1. Listen to your limits
2. Use the rule of 2, if your pain increases by 2 on the 10 point scale you need to adjust what you are doing, or how you are doing it
 - a. If it continues to increase you must stop
 - b. Not pushing past an increase in 2 points keeps you from hurting yourself
3. Do not be afraid of pain, focus on your gains and abilities and doing what you can with the pain not increasing
4. Write down what you are doing, your levels, time, the amount of time you can do things and monitor improvement in those areas to be able to see progress when progress is slow
5. Work toward slow steady gains
 - a. Do NOT try to progress too quickly – a rapid gain is usually followed by a flare up or regression
 - b. Start small
 - c. Add 10% per week and do not add based on how you feel
 - i. If you feel good do not add more
 - ii. If you feel poorly keep going
 - d. Look for changes week to week and month to month but not day to day
6. On bad days, keep going and do what you can do
 - a. Avoid staying in bed
 - b. Get up and move every hour, even if it is just to get and drink or go to the bathroom
7. Watch for compensation and correct
 - a. Avoid using 1 part of your body to assist another
 - i. For ex: avoid using your back to move your leg forward, try to use correct mechanics whenever possible
8. Alternate upper and lower extremity exercises, avoid over setting and working only a single area
9. Keep resistance moderate about 50% of what you could do
10. Keep your movements smaller, full range of motion movement tends to aggravate joint and muscle pain more than smaller movements
11. Neck pain: Avoid upper trap or levator strengthening until they have a solid scapular program
12. Knee issues: Avoid flexion past 70 deg for patellar tracking problems
13. Back pain: No crunches, no sit-ups, emphasis on core strength in a neutral spine, and back extension in neutral spine
14. Shoulder pain: Scapular strength but avoid anterior humeral glide – watch for poor shoulder movement with shoulders pulling into extension, avoid thumb down positions
15. People frequently know what they should do, but don't know that they aren't doing it
16. It is the details that are important