What is chronic pain?

Chronic, persistent or long-term pain is pain that continues for longer than 3 months. It is usually defined as pain that persists beyond the normal time that tissues take to heal following an injury.

Chronic pain is a significant global health burden.

Across the globe low back pain causes more disability than any other condition.

Main causes and conditions of chronic pain

- Low back pain
- Cervical and thoracic pain
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Osteoarthritis
- Shoulder pain
- Headache disorders
- Cancer
- Fibromyalgia

Facts about pain

**Acute pain** alarms us about potential tissue damage and typically comes on suddenly as a result of a specific incident such as surgery, childbirth, a fracture, or trauma.

**Chronic pain** serves no biologic purpose as it is not related to the threat of tissue damage. Chronic pain can be considered a disease state and can persist for months or years.

Pain persists in response to being overly sensitive to a perceived threat of harm to your body, despite the absence of tissue damage.

How physiotherapy helps

Physiotherapy helps people with chronic pain develop the skills they need to manage and take control of their condition, increase their activity and improve their quality of life.

Benefits of exercise for chronic pain

- **Flexibility**
  - Maintain flexibility and movement
- **Cardiovascular**
  - Important for cardiovascular health
- **Strength**
  - Helps to build and keep muscle tone
- **Mood**
  - Improves mood and general wellbeing

Exercise therapy is included in all guidelines for the treatment of chronic pain - ask your physiotherapist, the exercise expert.

Movement for Health

World Physiotherapy Day

World Confederation for Physical Therapy

www.wcpt.org