

# Eliminating Chronic Pain

*MyoRehab Has Answers*



## Providing a “Team Approach” to drug-free pain relief for over a quarter of a century

**C**hronic pain is considered a persistent condition you just have to learn to live with or manage with drugs. Although there are several definitions of chronic pain, it is generally defined as pain that lasts three months or longer. The real question is, how does pain become chronic and what can be done about it?

The most common cause of chronic pain is musculoskeletal dysfunction. Musculoskeletal pain is that which usually accompanies a car accident, sports injury or results from overdoing an unaccustomed physical activity such as yard work in the fall following a long restful Summer.

Although there is no universal solution to chronic pain, understanding the cause will, in many cases, lead to complete relief. At MyoRehab, we specialize in treating both chronic and acute musculoskeletal pain. When an injury is acute and the onset of pain is recent, basic treatment skills are usually adequate. Once pain becomes chronic, advanced treatment skills are required.

By the time pain becomes chronic, a complex of multiple components of the musculoskeletal and nervous system are involved. Treatment for one or two components of this complex provides temporary relief at best. Being able to identify and appropriately address all components that contribute to the perpetuation of chronic pain is the only solution.

The transition to chronic musculoskeletal pain usually begins with treatment at the site of the pain instead of the cause. Notice the pain caused by an injury to a muscle called the quadratus lumborum (Illustration A). The most common cause of injury to this muscle is lifting a heavy object while bent forward. The injury is compounded if the spine is also rotated.

Notice the pain pattern. It is not at the low back where the injured muscle is located. Treatment that focuses at the site of the pain will provide temporary relief that will allow the pain to return repeatedly which, in turn, stimulates the sensory nervous system repeatedly. It is this repeated pain stimulation that, over time, produces changes within the nervous system causing acute pain to transition to chronic pain.

This is just the beginning. As musculoskeletal pain

becomes chronic, we distort our posture in an attempt to avoid pain. It's subtle at first. We might sit leaning to one side or stand with our weight predominantly on one leg. In time, these postural distortions result in additional musculoskeletal pain. This produces additional stimulation to the nervous system adding to the pain complex.

Take a moment to look at illustration B. This muscle is the sternocleidomastoid or SCM. It is easily injured in a whiplash that can occur during a car accident, a slip and fall or even a near slip and no fall event. When the SCM is injured, pain from this muscle is experienced in the head. If not properly treated, this muscle shortens and pulls the head forward

overloading the upper back muscles (Illustration C) in a tug-of-war in an attempt to balance the relentless forward pull of the SCM.

Typically, treatment focuses on the headaches and upper back pain resulting in temporary relief. Without advanced treatment skills, this too will transition to chronic pain. At MyoRehab, therapists will identify and treat all components of your pain complex. During your first visit a detailed review of your medical history provides insight into factors that have initiated and now perpetuate your pain.

Distortions of the musculoskeletal system are evaluated with standard orthopedic tests and a neurological evaluation. And since each body is unique, a specific postural alignment evaluation combined with range of motion testing form an individualized treatment plan.

Treatments are drug-free and combine a hands-on approach with adjunctive therapies. These may include photo-biostimulation employing FDA approved cold lasers and Frequency Specific Microcurrent which targets specific soft tissue and various pain producing conditions.

The use of your body's own muscle energy is employed to gently move joints back to a neutral position after issues involving soft tissue are effectively addressed. An individualized home exercise program is developed to maintain the progress gained during treatment.

