



The 10 Pain Commandments!

Ground rules for living well with chronic pain

Dr. Christopher Gay, MD, eMBA | Interventional Pain Specialist | The Nervous Breakdown

Chronic pain management works best with consistent habits rather than heroic one-time fixes. Here are ten principles worth keeping close.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Thou shalt keep moving. Gentle, consistent movement keeps joints, muscles, and the nervous system from stiffening into worse pain than rest alone would cause.
2. Thou shalt not chase the MRI. Imaging findings and pain levels frequently do not match. Treat the person, not the picture.
3. Thou shalt protect thy sleep. Poor sleep amplifies pain sensitivity within a day or two. Sleep is treatment, not a luxury.
4. Thou shalt pace thyself. Doing too much on a good day often means paying for it for the next three.
5. Thou shalt mind the mind-body connection. Stress, anxiety, and low mood measurably increase pain intensity.
6. Thou shalt not fear movement out of catastrophizing. Believing activity equals damage often becomes self-fulfilling.
7. Thou shalt build a team. Pain medicine, physical therapy, behavioral health, and primary care working together outperform any single specialist.
8. Thou shalt question new prescriptions. Every new medication should have a clear purpose and an exit plan.
9. Thou shalt track patterns, not just pain scores. What you were doing, eating, and feeling before a flare often matters more than the number.
10. Thou shalt expect improvement, not perfection. It is about reclaiming function and quality of life, not reaching zero.

This handout is for general patient education and does not replace individualized medical advice. Discuss your specific diagnosis and treatment options with your physician.

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