



Make Your Personal Pre-Pain Report

To exit your pain cycle, you must be aware of what is happening when you enter the pain cycle. This is a big task, since the pain cycle is not obvious until you are already in it. But it is a skill that can be learned, and like any skill, the more you practice, the easier it becomes.

In the beginning, note your responses when you first become aware that you are in pain. Then think back to what the circumstances were just before that. The more you do this, the easier it will be to recall what was happening before you entered the pain cycle.

Your pain cycle depends on your personal experience and story. And just as your pain cycle is unique to you, so is your pre-pain checklist. Only you know what is happening in your body and mind. When you learn to notice and observe what happens before your pain cycle, you can learn to exit your cycle.

It is important to notice and record as much detail as possible. The following questions are only examples – if you experience something different, write it down!

When do you first notice you are in pain? Is it when you move a certain way, or think about a particular action? Is it a specific time of day?

What is your first thought when you notice you are in pain? What do you think of immediately after realizing you are in pain? Is it the pain itself, or something else?

Do any specific thoughts recur? Besides thinking of the pain itself, are there other thoughts that regularly accompany the pain?



Do your thoughts make up a story? Is there a movie about your pain that plays in your head?

What emotion(s) are you having? When you realize you are in pain, are you sad, or angry, or hopeless, or something else?

What sensations are you feeling? What does the pain feel like? Is it burning, or stabbing, or dull aching, or something else?

How is your body reacting? Does your body tense? Do you feel cold or hot? Are you immobilized?

Is there one specific area that is affected? Do you only feel the effects of the pain in one spot? When you think about that spot, does the pain move?

What is your breathing like? Is it shallow? Rapid? Do you feel like you're suffocating?

Are you hydrated? Are you thirsty? Have you been drinking liquids or eating foods with high water content?



What have you eaten? Are you hungry? Is there a specific food that you always eat before you are in pain? Have you eaten something different than normal?

Is the weather different? Has the temperature or humidity changed? Have there been sudden barometric changes?

What is happening in your environment? Are there loud or sudden noises? Is there a steady background noise? What is the lighting like? Are there odors?

Are you upset with something or someone? If so, by what or who? Have you just interacted with a particular person? What activity are you engaged in?

What happens to you before your pain worsens is extremely important. Once you are aware of how you get into a pain cycle, you can anticipate them. And once you can anticipate the cycle, it is easier to get out of it.