

is pain stopping you from being the *super mum* you wish to be?

by Kim Findlay

You don't have to cope with pain! Recent National Pain Week statistics estimated that over 3.5 million Australian's experience chronic pain.

A large volume of these statistics come from everyday super mums battling their way through their day while looking after what at times feels like a football team of ninjas who can contribute to making your pain or headache worse. If pain has become a significant part of your life then you are definitely not alone.

The good news is that not only do you not have to live with pain but research now shows that the more you understand your pain, the better equipped you are at getting rid of it!

What is pain?

The International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) defines pain as "an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage." The important key here is that tissue damage doesn't mean pain and pain doesn't mean tissue damage! So put away your Xrays and CT scans and stop googling the words written on the report.

All pain is an individual human experience that is entirely subjective and is based on a cumulative effect of one's past experiences, emotions, health, belief systems and more.

Pain is a message sent to your body from the brain when the brain thinks you are in danger, so in effect pain is essential for life in that it alerts us to danger and subsequently causes an appropriate reaction, such as pulling your hand away from a hot stove before you are burnt.

So despite common problems which exist in our joints, discs, muscles, ligaments, immune system or anywhere else, it won't hurt if your brain thinks you are not in danger.

Tips for eliminating pain and getting your super mum powers back:

1 Understand your pain and you will control it! If you understand the key factors causing your pain, you can work towards eliminating these elements in your life, which will ultimately control your pain. Remember that ALL pain is based on your body's perceived threat value. The trick with managing pain is figuring out why the brain has come to the conclusion that you are in danger and need protecting. So "what is it in me



that is making my brain decide to express pain?" Remember back pain, neck pain and headaches are not normal. I ask a lots of my patients to watch a short 5 minutes video called "understand pain in 5 minutes," before working with them to break down their pain, so start here.

2 Get your endorphin kick with exercise.

Don't have time with the kids I hear you say! Try incorporating the kids into your exercise regime. This can be as simple as a walk with the pram in the park, kicking a ball around the backyard with the older kids and increasing your incidental exercise. Endorphins are brain chemicals that help improve your mood while also blocking pain signals.

3 Find something you like doing and do

lots of it! Ever noticed that your pain is alleviated when you are doing something that makes you happy? Your body gets a similar Oxytocin effect as when you are exercising just by doing activities that make you happy. This can be as simple as going out for a coffee with people who you enjoy being around.

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