

# *Spine & Joint Care:*

MUSCULOSKELETAL PAIN PROGRAM

SELF-CARE WHILE  
MANAGING PAIN



BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE ODS HEALTH COACHING PROGRAM

## *Small steps can get you moving again*

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Overcoming musculoskeletal pain may seem daunting, but just one step at a time can lead you down the road to feeling a lot better. Understanding your own pain and learning how to best treat it is a great place to start. Use this guide as your road map – we've included information on the different kinds of pain and medications, as well as suggestions for easy ways you can take care of yourself.

Work with your healthcare team to create a treatment plan that will help you feel better and live more fully. Set goals and track your progress using the log sheets provided. Then celebrate your increased mobility!

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## Chapter 1: The facts about pain

### WHAT IS PAIN?

Pain is an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential injury to your body’s bones, muscles and tissues. Pain usually falls into two categories:

- **Acute pain.** This type of pain does not last forever. It has a beginning, middle and end. Acute pain can last just a few moments or hours, or it can last weeks or months while an injury heals or you recover from a disease.
- **Chronic pain.** This type of pain seems like it will not go away. Chronic pain can be constant or it can occur on and off. This pain can negatively affect your ability to function in life as well as your overall sense of well-being.

It can be difficult to tell the difference between untreated acute pain and chronic pain. Work with your healthcare provider to understand the root cause of your pain. If an injury or disease caused your pain and you are not feeling better after six weeks or so, speak to your healthcare provider about possible treatment for chronic pain.

Chronic pain syndrome is the extreme of chronic pain. Over time, various injuries, behaviors and habits can build up to create a painful state. This syndrome can lead to significant discomfort and disruption to your life. That’s why it’s important to take care of injuries and develop good musculoskeletal habits.

Types of pain	
<b>Neuropathic pain</b>	This pain occurs when the nervous system is damaged or stops functioning normally. It’s described as “burning,” “shooting” or “stabbing.”
<b>Muscle pain</b>	When pain is located in certain muscles or soft tissues, it is called “myofascial pain.” Typical areas affected are the neck, shoulders, arms, lower back, hips and lower extremities.
<b>Inflammatory pain</b>	Pain caused by arthritis, infection, tissue injury or surgery is called “nociceptive pain.” Inflammatory chemicals in your body stimulate the primary sensory nerves that carry pain information to the spinal cord. Symptoms include heat, redness and swelling.
<b>Mechanical or compressive pain</b>	This type of pain is typically caused by fractures; obstructions; dislocations; and compression of tissue by tumors, cysts and bony structures. Pain is aggravated by activity and temporarily relieved by rest. Neck and back pain are commonly related to muscle-ligament strain or sprain, degeneration of disks or facets, or osteoporosis with compression fractures. This pain is another type of nociceptive pain.

## PAIN AWARENESS

When a part of you is in pain, your whole body reacts. As you try to understand, accept and manage your condition, your behavior and emotions may go through a series of ups and downs. One of the first noticeable effects of chronic pain is the change it brings in your day-to-day activities.

Take some time to think about your pain. How is it affecting your life? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### Check the areas in your life that are affected:

- Work
- Housework
- General activity
- Walking ability
- Enjoyment of life
- Mood
- Sleep
- Relationships
- Use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs
- Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## TRACK YOUR PAIN

Use the following chart to log how you feel each day. Choose the face that best describes your level of pain and mark the numeral in the chart. This will help you visualize how your pain may vary day to day.



	DAYS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
LEVEL OF PAIN	<i>example</i>														
0	X														
2															
4															
6															
8															
10															





## Chapter 2: Taking medicine safely

### PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS TO CONTROL PAIN

Depending on the severity of your pain, your doctor may prescribe medicine to help reduce or eliminate your discomfort improve functioning after an injury or loss of mobility for another reason.

It's important to discuss your health history with your doctor before you start taking any new medicine. Certain health conditions put you at increased risk of drug side effects. It's also important to let your doctor know what medicines you are already taking. Some medications can interact with one another, causing negative side effects. You and your doctor can find the medication that best relieves your pain with the lowest risk of side effects.

Here are some questions to ask your doctor or pharmacist about medicines:

- How often should I take this medicine?
- Should I take this medicine with food or between meals?
- What side effects might occur?
- Should I take this medicine with the other prescription medicines I take?
- Is this medication safe, considering the other medical conditions I have?
- Can exercise eliminate the need for this medication?

### OVER-THE-COUNTER PAIN MEDICATIONS

There are two kinds of pain medicines that can be purchased without a prescription:

- **Acetaminophen.** This common pain reliever is often the first type of medicine that doctors recommend for pain. Found in Tylenol and similar nonprescription drugs, it is effective and is relatively safe compared to other drugs.
- **Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).** These medicines help reduce pain as well as inflammation. Common NSAIDs include aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen and naproxen sodium. These drugs work by blocking substances called “prostaglandins,” which contribute to inflammation and pain in the body. However, each NSAID is a unique chemical and has a slightly different effect.

Some NSAIDs are available over the counter, but more than a dozen others require a prescription. Some people respond better to one NSAID than another. All NSAIDs have possible side effects, including stomach irritation and, less often, reduced kidney function.

Let your doctor know if you are using over-the-counter pain medications. It's especially important that your doctor monitor your progress if you are

taking NSAIDs. The longer you use them, the more likely it is that you might develop side effects. In addition, NSAIDs can interfere with other medications, causing further health issues.

## GOOD MEDICINE HABITS

Prevent problems with drug interactions and misuse by following these tips:

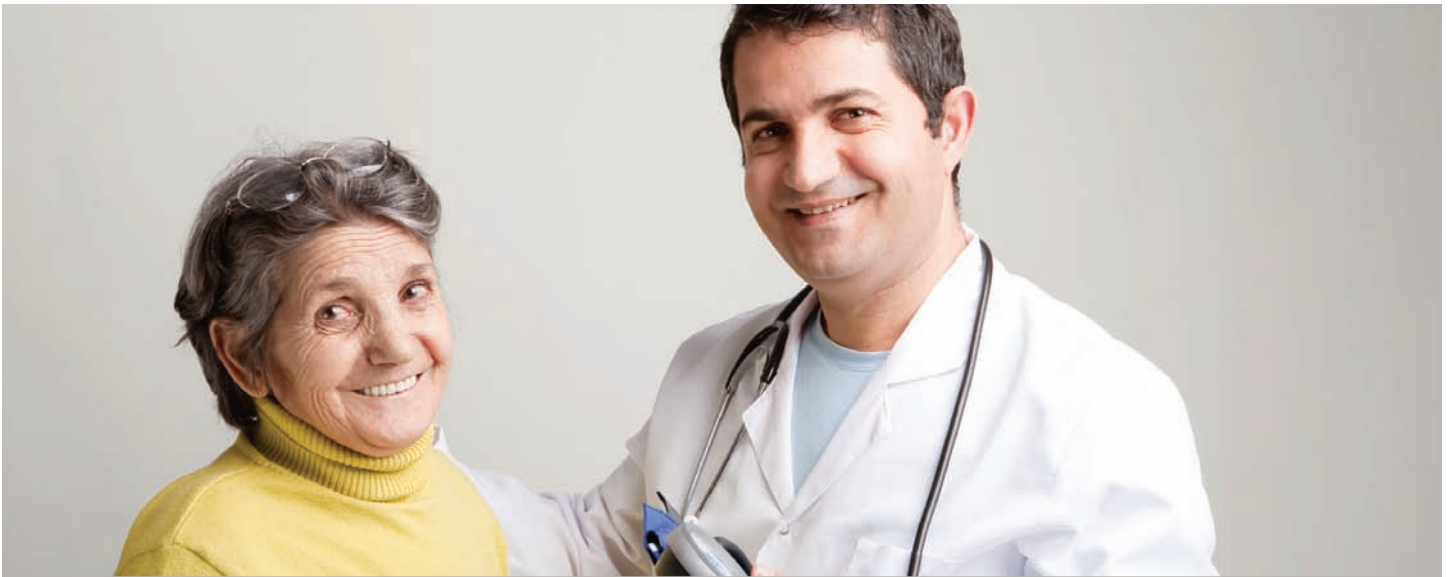
- Fill all your prescriptions at the same time.
- Make sure you understand how to take each medicine — talk to your doctor or pharmacist.
- Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all prescription and nonprescription medicines you take, including vitamins.
- Tell your doctor and pharmacist if you have any medical conditions or allergies to any medicines or foods. Also let them know if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- Keep a list of all your medicines and their dosages, and carry it with you. The list should include the name of the medicine, its purpose, when to take it and how to take it (for example, with water or food, or between meals).
- Visit **myODS** to view your prescription history online at [www.odscompanies.com/members](http://www.odscompanies.com/members).

Many types of medications are available to help control pain. Managing multiple medications can be difficult. Your health coach, along with your provider and pharmacist, can help you with any questions you may have.

## TRACK YOUR MEDICATIONS

Write down the names of all the medicines you take, including vitamins and over-the-counter drugs, on page 25. Post this chart in a convenient location to help you remember to take your medication on time. Take this chart with you when you visit your doctor and use it to discuss your medication. If you have any questions about your medication, talk to your provider.





## *Chapter 3: Communicating with your healthcare team*

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### **ASK QUESTIONS**

It's important to talk with your healthcare provider so that he or she has a clear understanding of your health concerns. Be sure to communicate symptoms, medication side effects and your personal concerns to your provider. Part of your provider's job is to answer questions about your condition, your care and your medications.

Here are some questions to take with you to get the most out of your next appointment:

- What are the goals for my treatment?
- Can I expect to be completely pain-free?
- What is my own role in the treatment plan?
- How can I reach you in an emergency?
- How will other illnesses I have affect my treatment?

### **THE PEOPLE WHO CARE FOR YOU**

Many types of health professionals care for people with musculoskeletal and joint pain. Each professional approaches the treatment of pain in a slightly different way. Some healthcare providers focus on very specific types of diseases and conditions, while others take a more general approach. It is best to choose one main provider who helps coordinate your care. If necessary your providers may also refer you on to other specialists who can be of help.

Profession	Description
<b>Primary care physicians</b>	Manage your overall care and will provide referrals as needed.
<b>Rheumatologists</b>	Specialize in treating arthritis and related conditions that affect joints, muscles and bones.
<b>Orthopedists</b>	Specialize in the treatment of and surgery for bone and joint diseases.
<b>Physical therapists</b>	Work with patients to improve joint function, flexibility and strength.
<b>Occupational therapists</b>	Teach patients ways to protect joints, minimize pain, conserve energy and perform basic activities of daily living.
<b>Dietitians</b>	Teach ways to use a good diet to improve overall health and maintain an ideal weight.
<b>Nurse educators</b>	Specialize in helping patients understand their overall condition and implement treatment plans.
<b>Physiatrists</b>	Specializing in physical medicine and rehabilitation for people with severe impairment. These doctors are experts at diagnosing and treating musculoskeletal injuries and pain syndromes.
<b>Licensed acupuncturists</b>	Help reduce pain and improve physical functioning by inserting fine needles into the skin at specific energy flow points on the body.
<b>Chiropractors</b>	Make adjustments to the spine to restore normal spinal alignment and facilitate movement.
<b>Psychiatrists</b>	Specializes in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of mental, addictive and emotional disorders. These physicians order diagnostic tests, prescribe medications, practice psychotherapy, and help patients and their families cope with stress and crises.
<b>Psychologists</b>	Help patients cope with difficulties in the home and workplace resulting from their medical conditions.
<b>Social workers</b>	Assist patients with social challenges caused by disability, unemployment and financial hardships. They offer home healthcare and assist with other needs resulting from their medical conditions.

The different providers that you work with make up your personal healthcare team. Your primary care provider or health coach can help you determine which types of health professionals might be of most help to you. Be sure to let each provider know you are working with the others so that they can coordinate your treatment plan.

To find out details about your plan benefits and eligibility for specific healthcare professionals, call ODS Customer Service at **503-243-3962** or toll-free at **877-605-3229**, or visit **myODS** at [www.odscompanies.com/members](http://www.odscompanies.com/members).

### WHO'S ON YOUR TEAM?

List the names and contact information for each of your healthcare providers. Keep this list handy in case you or a family member needs to make an appointment or call to ask questions.

**Provider's name:**

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Clinic or facility name:

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Address:

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Phone:

E-mail:

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**Provider's name:**

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Clinic or facility name:

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Address:

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Phone:

E-mail:

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**Provider's name:**

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Clinic or facility name:

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Address:

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Phone:

E-mail:

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## Chapter 4: Pain, mood and emotions

Just as your behavior fluctuates when you're in pain, so do your emotions. Often, the two go hand in hand — the more you're able to do, the better your mood, and the less you're able to do, the worse your mood. Like your behaviors, your emotions also tend to follow a cyclical pattern.

### YOUR AMAZING BRAIN

An estimated 30 to 54 percent of patients with chronic pain also have some level of depression.\* Treating pain and depression at the same time can sometimes be the most effective way to decrease symptoms of both conditions.

Research shows that individuals experience pain and the emotions related to depression in the same part of the brain.\*\* Pain and depression are both influenced by chemicals in the brain, including serotonin, norepinephrine and dopamine. When pain is increased or decreased, depression can increase or decrease as well.

Because of this connection between pain and depression, many healthcare providers will prescribe antidepressants to help manage pain and its related symptoms. Many patients with pain do not understand this; they feel they are being told that it's all in their head or that their provider doesn't believe they really are in pain. The truth is, combining antidepressants with pain medications and other pain treatments can be very helpful for many individuals who have chronic pain.

\*Banks, S.M. and Kerns, R.D. "Explaining High Rates of Depression in Chronic Pain: A Diathesis-Stress Framework," *Psychological Bulletin*, 119(1). 1996.

\*\*Jann, M.W. and Slade, J.H. "Antidepressant Agents for the Treatment of Chronic Pain and Depression," *Pharmacotherapy*, 27(11). 2008.

## DO YOU THINK YOU MIGHT BE DEPRESSED?

Depression has many symptoms. Place a check mark next to the symptoms\* below that you have experienced, and then share this with your healthcare provider during your next visit.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

- I have felt sad for a while.
- I'm not interested in activities I used to enjoy.
- I feel guilty.
- I can't sit still, and I feel restless.
- I move more slowly than usual.
- It's hard to concentrate, remember things or make decisions.
- I can't fall asleep, I wake up too early, or I'm sleeping more than usual.
- I'm not hungry, or I've lost weight.
- I'm eating more than I used to, or I've gained weight.
- I feel irritable and cranky.
- I'm tired and out of energy.

- I have headaches.
- I think about death or suicide.\*\*

If you checked any of the boxes above and these symptoms have lasted most of the day every day for two weeks or more, you might have depression. Talk to your healthcare provider.

You can also contact your ODS health coach for more information about the ODS Depression Care Program or e-mail us at [depression@odscompanies.com](mailto:depression@odscompanies.com).

- Dial 911.
- Go to the emergency room.
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **800-273-TALK (800-273-8255)**.

For a referral to an ODS Behavioral Health provider, call **800-799-9391**.

*\*Criteria for Major Depressive Episode, pg 356, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition Text Revision. Washington, DC, American Psychiatric Association, 2000*

**\*\*If you are thinking about hurting yourself, it's important to get help immediately. Remember, you are not alone.**

## TRACK YOUR MOOD

Use the log sheet below to record and monitor your mood and symptoms, and list any questions you have for your phone-coaching session.

	DAYS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
<b>MOOD</b>	<i>example</i>														
Very good	X														
Good															
Somewhat good															
So-so															
Somewhat depressed															
Depressed															

Questions: \_\_\_\_\_



A photograph of an elderly couple walking away from the camera on a brick-paved path. The man is wearing a yellow polo shirt, khaki shorts, and a straw hat with a red band. The woman is wearing a pink and white striped t-shirt, white shorts, and a straw hat. They are surrounded by lush greenery and white flowers. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

“ People who take an *active role* in their treatment tend to have *better quality of life*, reduce their sense of suffering and feel more empowered.”

— PENNEY COWAN, *Founder and Executive Director*, AMERICAN CHRONIC PAIN ASSOCIATION



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## Chapter 5: Building your support network

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When you are dealing with any health condition, it's important to build a support network of people who you can turn to for help. Your network is especially important when you are dealing with pain or related depression.

Make a list of supportive family members and friends you can call on a regular basis. List their phone numbers and what they can do to help you.

**Name:**

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Phone number:

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How this person can help:

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**Name:**

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Phone number:

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How this person can help:

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**Name:**

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Phone number:

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How this person can help:

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**Name:**

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Phone number:

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How this person can help:

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If your condition is severe, talk to a family member or friend about handling your personal affairs if for any reason you cannot. Write this person's name and contact information below.

**Name:**

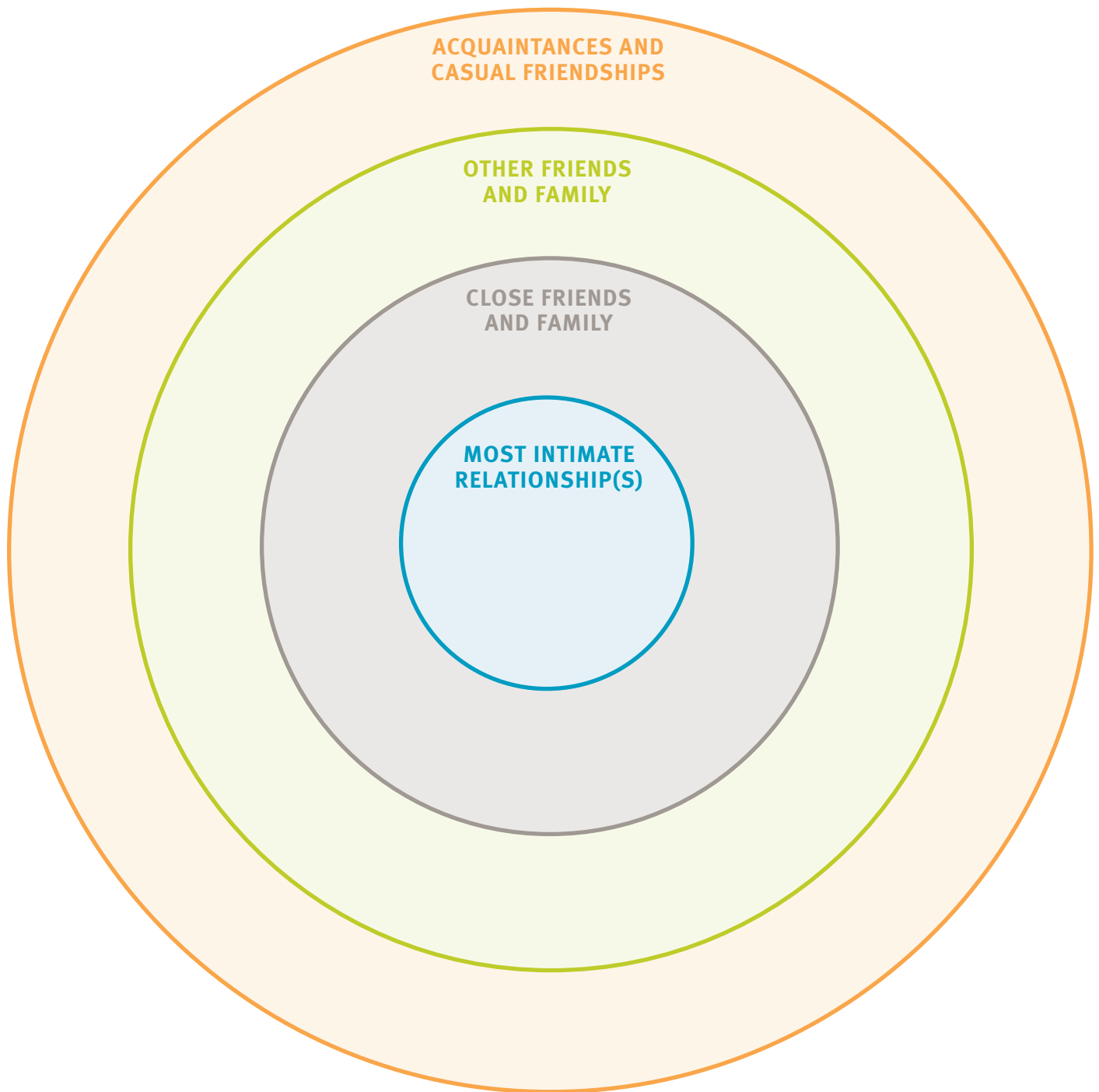
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Phone number:

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Share the names of the people in your support network with your care provider.

A healthy social support network is an important part of feeling well emotionally. Write the names of the people in your network in the circles below, with the inner circles containing your closest friends and family and the outer circles containing more casual acquaintances.



**Consider any changes you would like to make in your social support network.**

- Who would you like to bring closer?
- Who would you like to get more distance from? Draw an arrow from their names to where you would like them to be.
- How can you start to make these changes?
- Who haven't you seen for a while that you'd like to reconnect with?



## *Chapter 6: Self-care for better mobility*

### **TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN YOUR OWN WELL-BEING**

While healthcare professionals can prescribe medication or recommend treatments to help you manage your pain, the real key to living well with pain is you. You will be on the road to feeling better faster if you take an active role in your treatment by taking care of yourself.

What does taking care of yourself mean to you? Sometimes it can be as simple as knowing when to rest and when to reach out to a friend or family member for help.

It's helpful to write up a plan of care to keep yourself on track as you develop new habits for taking care of yourself. A plan of care includes writing down your personal goals, establishing a physical activity and sleep schedule, and determining other ways to decrease your pain.

Use Appendix A on page 23 to set personal health goals. As you review this chapter take note of your thoughts and ideas for meeting your goals.

### **GET PHYSICAL**

It's important that you stay active, even when you are dealing with pain. Regular physical activity plays a key role in healing injuries and disease, and it is critical for ongoing wellness.

If you have had an injury or have been diagnosed with a painful health condition, your healthcare provider may recommend a change in activities to avoid provoking additional pain. This may include changing the way you work or exercise. It may mean switching from high-impact activities, such as running, aerobics, dancing, jumping or competitive sports, to low-impact exercises, such as walking, swimming, water aerobics or cycling. Stretching exercises such as resistance bands, pilates, yoga or tai chi may also be recommended.

A well-rounded fitness program includes activities for endurance, strength, balance and flexibility. Activity helps improve musculoskeletal function and overall fitness. Exercise also can help improve your mood, strengthen the heart, improve blood flow and help you maintain optimum weight. All of these improvements can lead to less pain.

Many people suffering from pain are afraid of physical activity. Some fear that too much movement or the wrong type of movement will cause increased pain. However, inactivity or avoidance of movement can lead to weakening of muscles, weight issues, poor circulation, stiffness and many other health problems, including serious physical disability.

Use the following log sheet to write down your own fears. Work with your healthcare providers to find solutions that will enable you to approach physical activity in a way that feels safe.

## TIPS FOR EXERCISING SAFELY

- Find an exercise level that feels right for you.
- Go slow and stop if you feel increased or sharp pain.
- To reduce the risk of injury, know your limit.
- Drink plenty of water after you finish exercising.
- Find out if it is okay to use pain relievers to make exercising more comfortable.
- Find out if you should ice painful areas after exercising.
- If you are experiencing pain or swelling in a joint, seek professional guidance.

## WHAT ARE YOUR FEARS?

If you are avoiding physical activity, take some time to think about why this is happening. List your fears in the space below. Share this list with your healthcare providers or health coach, and ask for help in overcoming your fears.

**My fears:**

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**Ways I can overcome fear:**

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Types of exercise	
<b>Strengthening</b>	These exercises strengthen muscles that support joints and are especially helpful for people with arthritis. You can use hand weights, exercise bands, body weight or weight machines to help increase strength.
<b>Aerobic</b>	These exercises get your heart pumping and can keep your lungs and circulatory system in shape, help control weight and improve overall fitness. Aerobic activity includes walking as well as running, dancing and cycling.
<b>Range-of-motion</b>	These activities help reduce stiffness and increase proper joint movement and flexibility. Range-of-motion exercises include stretching, yoga, Pilates, tai chi and prolonged stretching.
<b>Agility</b>	These activities help with coordination and dexterity and are important for maintaining daily living skills. Agility can be increased through dancing, jumping rope and playing basketball.
<b>Body Composition</b>	This is the percentage of fat in relation to lean mass like bone and muscle. All of the above exercises can help you maintain a healthy body composition, which is an important part of reducing pain and discomfort in your body. Reducing excess body fat can relieve stress on your joints, limit further injury and increase mobility. A well balanced diet and regular exercise can help reduce fat and build muscle. A dietitian can teach you about nutrition and help you develop healthy eating habits.

Ask your health coach to help you come up with ideas for a physical activity routine.

**Activity:**

\_\_\_\_\_ ( \_\_\_\_ days/week,  
\_\_\_\_ minutes)

\_\_\_\_\_ ( \_\_\_\_ days/week,  
\_\_\_\_ minutes)

\_\_\_\_\_ ( \_\_\_\_ days/week,  
\_\_\_\_ minutes)

## SLEEP WELL

Getting a good night's sleep on a regular basis can minimize pain and help you cope with the effects of your disease or injury. If pain makes it difficult to sleep at night, talk to your provider or physical therapist. Ask about specific sleeping positions that will make you more comfortable. Find out if there is a specific type of mattress or pillow that is best for your condition. You might also work with your provider to time your medications for more pain relief at night.

Different people need different amounts of restful sleep to stay healthy. In general, most people need between seven and nine hours of sleep each night to feel refreshed.

Here are some tips for improving your sleeping habits:

- Develop a routine with your sleep schedule by getting up at the same time each morning and going to bed at the same time each night.
- Don't take naps during the day.
- Exercise early in the day. Avoid physical activity two hours before bedtime. Physical activity energizes the body, and being active late can make it difficult to fall asleep.
- Avoid caffeine after 6 p.m. Caffeine is a stimulant and can prevent sleep.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages in the evening. Alcohol does not lead to normal, restful sleep.
- Avoid heavy meals two hours before bedtime. If your body is focused on digestion, it is more difficult to sleep deeply.
- Take warm baths to soothe and relax sore muscles before bed.
- Use relaxation techniques such as reading, meditation, deep breathing or stretching before bedtime.
- Keep your bedroom dark, quiet and cool.
- Use your bedroom for sleep and sex only. Avoid having a TV or radio in your bedroom.

If you wake up in pain and cannot go back to sleep, try another position. Use pillows to prop up your limbs for better alignment and added comfort. If you cannot get back to sleep, get up and have some herbal tea or take a warm bath.

Work with your health coach to make a list of ideas for improving your sleep habits.

I can do the following to get better sleep:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## BUILDING RESILIENCE

Feeling pain in your body can make life challenging — physically, but also emotionally. How do you deal with challenging life events? Many people react with a flood of strong emotions and a sense of uncertainty. Most people, over time, learn to adapt to changing situations and stressful conditions. What enables them to do so? Adapting to challenging events involves “resilience,” an ongoing process that requires time and effort, as well as action when necessary.

Resilience is strength tempered by flexibility. It's about preparing for or having the power to spring back from life's ups and downs — hanging onto your spirit in the midst of change and having confidence in your own internal compass.

Resilient people are proactive, positive, flexible, focused and organized. These individuals have the ability to:

- See the possibility of improving
- Understand their personal strengths, weaknesses and limits
- Continuously seek more information about how they can improve
- Consider a variety of options and select those that seem to be in their best interest



## ARE YOU RESILIENT?

Developing resilience is a personal journey and staying flexible is the key. Resilience involves maintaining balance in your life as you deal with stressful circumstances and traumatic events such as a painful injury or disease. Here are some tips for becoming more resilient:

- Let yourself experience strong emotions, but try to recognize when you need to avoid experiencing them in order to function in your life.
- Take action to deal with your problems and meet the demands of daily living, but also step back to rest and re-energize yourself.
- Spend time with loved ones to gain support and encouragement, but also spend time alone nurturing yourself.

Remember, you are not an island. Rely on others when you need help, but rely on yourself when you can.

What makes you feel stressed or less resilient?

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What are your strategies for building resilience?

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# Chapter 7: Informed decision-making

## WEIGHING THE OPTIONS

Making decisions about your treatment is an important part of self-care. Identifying the best healthcare option may be challenging because each option has the potential for desirable and undesirable outcomes.

To build decision-making skills, consider the following:

- All of your options
- The chances of positive and negative effects
- The desirability or value of these effects

Your healthcare providers can give you advice and help you understand your options, but only you can know what's right for yourself. Using the following personal decision form, discuss concerns with your ODS health coach.

## PERSONAL DECISION ACTIVITY

When making a decision about your health, try to be open to all of the treatment options you are presented with. If you are facing a decision about your treatment, use this personal decision form to consider each of your options carefully.

As you think about your treatment options, try walking through these four steps:

- Clarify what decision you need to make
- Identify your decision-making needs
- Explore your needs
- Plan the next steps

Answer the following questions to work through your decision-making process.

1. What decision do you face? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you feel sure about which option is best for you?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you know about your options?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you understand the benefits and risks for each option? Use the chart below to work through the decision-making process.

### BENEFITS

OPTIONS	REASON TO CHOOSE	HOW MUCH DOES IT MATTER TO YOU?
OPTION 1:		
OPTION 2:		
OPTION 3:		

### RISKS

OPTIONS	REASON TO AVOID	HOW MUCH DOES IT MATTER TO YOU?
OPTION 1:		
OPTION 2:		
OPTION 3:		



# Appendix A: Setting personal health goals

Dealing with a painful injury or health condition is not easy. Setting personal health goals and breaking them down into small steps can help you manage your pain. Monitoring your progress will help you see your improvements more easily.

What steps can you take to help manage your pain? Some examples are:

- Take a walk every day
- Get eight hours of sleep each night

Make sure your goals are truly achievable and not something that is too difficult for you at this time. Be specific. Instead of saying, “I will eat better,” say, “I will eat two servings of fruit or vegetables with every meal.” If you are not sure where to start, talk to your health coach for guidance. A measure for success is to pick a goal that is both important to you and that you are confident you will achieve!

## MY GOALS

1. List your goal \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I will be ready to start working on this goal on:  
*(choose a start date)* \_\_\_\_\_

I will be able to achieve this goal by: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(choose a realistic timeframe to meet your goal)*

On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is this goal to me?  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
*Not important* *Very important*

On a scale of 1 to 10, how confident am I that I can achieve this goal?  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
*I don't think I will meet my goal* *I'm positive I will meet my goal*

2. List your goal \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I will be ready to start working on this goal on:  
*(choose a start date)* \_\_\_\_\_

I will be able to achieve this goal by: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(choose a realistic timeframe to meet your goal)*

On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is this goal to me?  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
*Not important* *Very important*

On a scale of 1 to 10, how confident am I that I can achieve this goal?  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
*I don't think I will meet my goal* *I'm positive I will meet my goal*

3. List your goal \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I will be ready to start working on this goal on:  
*(choose a start date)* \_\_\_\_\_

I will be able to achieve this goal by: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(choose a realistic timeframe to meet your goal)*

On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is this goal to me?  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
*Not important* *Very important*

On a scale of 1 to 10, how confident am I that I can achieve this goal?  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
*I don't think I will meet my goal* *I'm positive I will meet my goal*



## OVERCOMING BARRIERS

Make a list of obstacles that might prevent you from reaching your goals and think about solutions for overcoming them.

### Barrier

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### Solution

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Use your personal strengths to help you manage your pain and overcome barriers. What skills or strengths can you draw upon to help accomplish your health goals? \_\_\_\_\_

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Celebrate your success. Think of simple ways to reward yourself once you have met a goal. Having something to look forward to can help keep you focused. How will you celebrate? \_\_\_\_\_

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Ask the people in your support network to help you reach your goals. What can your friends and family do to help you as you are taking care of yourself? \_\_\_\_\_

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## GOOD MUSCULOSKELETAL HABITS

- Stay active to keep your body flexible, strong and healthy.
- Take time to stretch your muscles after exercising.
- Practice good posture when standing, walking and sitting — especially when working at the computer.
- Bend your knees and use your legs when lifting heavy objects.
- Eat a balanced diet that includes plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- Find a comfortable mattress and the right pillow for the way you like to sleep (on your back, on your side, etc.).
- Get plenty of sleep each night.

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## *Track your medications*

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Write down the names of all the medicines you take, including vitamins and over-the-counter drugs. Post this chart in a convenient location to help you remember to take your medication on time. Take this chart with you when you visit your doctor and use it to discuss your medication. If you have any questions about your medication, talk to your provider.

Name of medication	What it's for	Dose	How often to take it

*Cut along dashed lines to detach*

**NOTES**

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Name of medication	What it's for	Dose	How often to take it



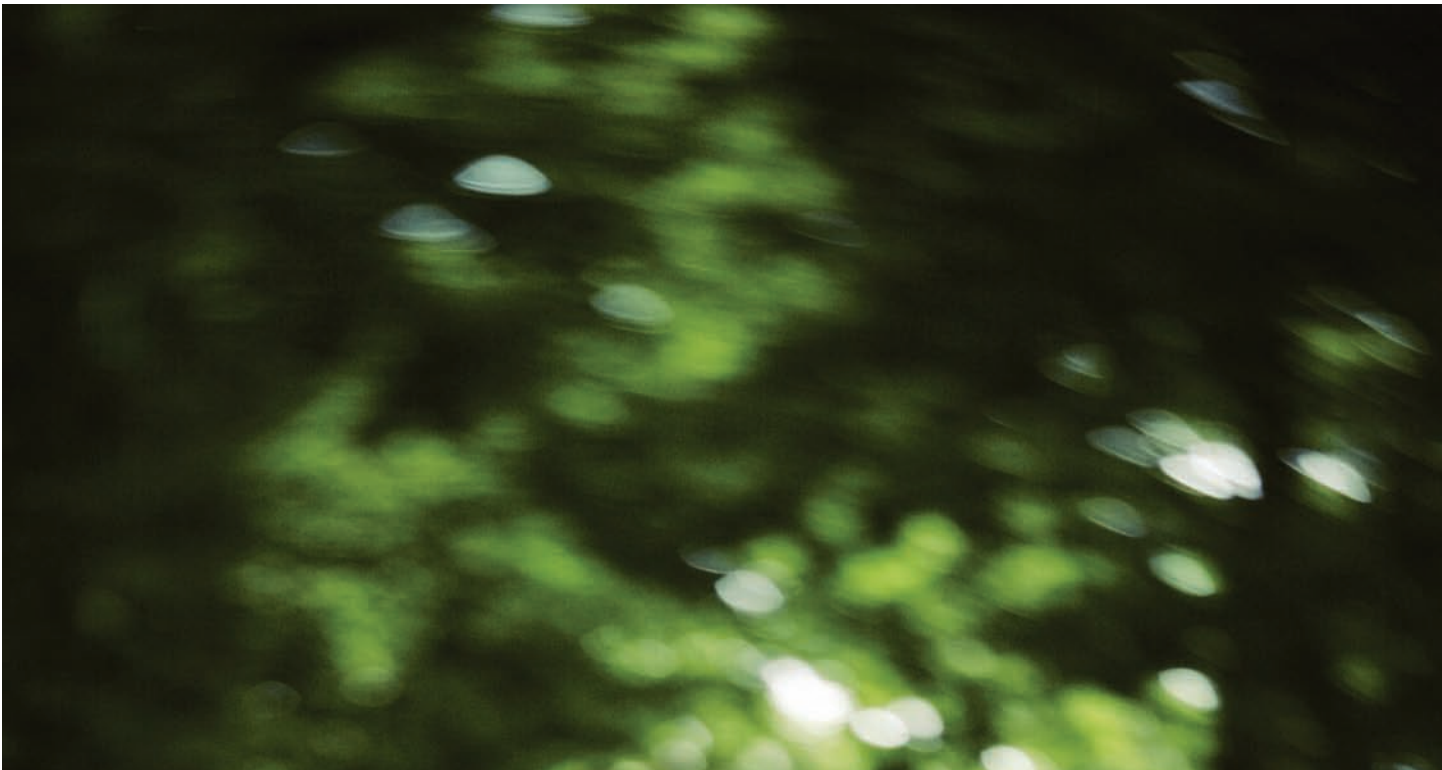












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