



Neil Pearson: Movement and Yoga as Embodied Education in Pain Care



Neil Pearson is a physical therapist, yoga therapist and clinical assistant professor at the University of British Columbia, teaching in the physiotherapy and pain medicine subspecialty. Find out how unexplored misconceptions about pain can limit recovery, while the acquisition of knowledge is often the foundation from which change arises when pain persists.

TOP EMBODIMENT TIP: Use movements as a way to be curious about every aspect of your existence.

Embodied Pain Management: Being Gentle and Paying Attention

- There is more suicide around chronic pain than in depression because of the mental connection that is addiction.
- With chronic pain we often have the idea that it will never change no matter what we do.
- Use simple movements to explore your range of motion. How much pain is okay?
- Pay attention to your breath, the feeling of the air as it goes through. And then try some basic movement again.
- Notice any change.

Changing The Breath: Using the Breath to Increase the Range of Movements

- Make your breath longer and smoother on each inhale and each exhale. Notice the pause in between each.
- Soften the breath as if you were softening a gripped muscle.
- Notice if anything changes in the ease of movement or the tension, discomfort or pain.
- Start observing the non pain sensations in your body, especially around the neck and shoulders.
- As you explore your sensations, notice more subtle sensations that you wouldn't find right at beginning.

Noticing: Learning to Let Go

- When noticing a sensation, painful or not, allow yourself to then let it go and move on to the next sensation.
- Allow yourself to stretch, take a break from the exercises and then come back to it.
- Invite micro-movements in your hands as you breathe and then let it go.
- Imagine watching yourself doing those simple movements, and once done, check with yourself again how it feels.
- Imagine the feeling of the movement, from the most obvious sensation to the most subtle sensation and imagine that the movement is easier now, and again check with yourself how you feel in your body.
- After this embodied practice, we know that pain can change.

Resources:

- ❖ **Website:** paincareu.com/ and paincareaware.com



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Dylan Newcomb: Founder & lead trainer of UZAZU Embodied Intelligence, master embodiment-based coach for helping professionals & cultural creatives, embodiment researcher, and former professional dancer.

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