

Pain-Stress Cycle

When movement of a body part leads to pain, there is a tendency to tighten muscles to stop moving that joint. Muscle spasms can occur, which can further tighten muscles and cause pain. Continually not using a joint may cause contracture (shortening) of muscles and ligaments, making less movement possible. This loss of motion can lead to depression and stress, which increases muscle tension and causes more pain. The additional pain can increase anxiety. And more anxiety = more tension = more pain ... and so on through the cycle.

Activities such as stress management techniques and pain relief measures can break this cycle and reduce pain and stress.

