

# STRATEGIES YOU CAN IMPLEMENT TODAY

When navigating the path of taking control of persistent pain, there are a few things we can start doing *today* to help reach your goals over time. Below is a few of our favorite tips to creating the best environment to succeed.



Perspective



Small Victories



Hurt ≠ Harm



Expectations



## Perspective

If you imagine your pain as a standard 8x11 sheet of paper, we encourage you to take inventory of *where you are holding your pain*. If we hold it directly in front of our face, we may lose sight of everything else in our life. Instead, try and "hold it at arm's length" so you can still see the world around you! We are not *minimizing* your experience, we are not changing the size, quality, or shape of it...simply allowing us to keep perspective. Which can make all the difference.



## Small Victories

It is easy to focus on our one large goal: being out of pain. While this may not be helpful as pain is a part of being a human, we instead encourage you to celebrate the small victories! This might be improved tolerance to a task, good consistency with your home program, getting stronger or any combination of the above. Just like accumulating wealth or losing weight, it is rarely the "get rich quick" scheme or "fad diet" that succeeds but rather the accumulation of small goals that lead to our bigger goal!



## Hurt ≠ Harm

The wealth of scientific literature available to us currently has routinely shown that pain is highly modifiable. We can have more pain in different contexts, we see "abnormal" MRI findings in people with *no* pain (and vice versa), and pain does not have a 1:1 correlation with tissue quality.

Pain can be *increased* when we are anxious, stressed or scared regardless of the injury. [Here is a great blog post by Greg Lehman](#) about how our nervous system can become highly sensitive and our experience can become disproportionate to our injury or tissue state. This does not mean "it's all in your head" and to ignore pain, but simply pain is a message and our mind and body are one, not separate.



## Expectations

Just like the bumper sticker says, "whether you think you can or cannot, you are probably right", *our expectations often dictate our experience*. We encourage you to have a positive mindset regarding your ability to take control of your experience, to not let bad days represent your progress, and to try and not be discouraged when a change in your normal activity creates a change in your pain. We encourage you to be *confident* that you can do things you may have been fearful of before (but not reckless) and to be OK with set-backs as these are normal and will likely improve with time.

