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# **MINDFULNESS-BASED POST-OPERATIVE CHRONIC SHOULDER PAIN MANAGEMENT MODULE 5: GUIDED COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY (CBT)**



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**We are largely responsible for the way we feel and behave.**

Cognitive behavioural therapy is based on the principle that we are potentially capable of knowing our thoughts, speech, actions and emotions. Through a series of self assessments and examinations, we learn that our thoughts, actions, reactions, beliefs, etc. affect our lives and emotions that go with them. By doing so, we change our habitual patterns (both thinking and acting) to improve the quality of our lives, especially after experiencing physical traumas such as injuries and years of persistent pain.

**The meaning of CBT ....**

**COGNITIVE** - thinking processes

Our thinking processes (repetitive) affect the way we make decisions, opinions of ourselves and how we feel

**BEHAVIOURS** - doing processes

Our behaviours (habitual actions) are either conscious or unconscious as a result of what we learned and become accustomed to

**THERAPY** - treatment for a condition, diagnosis or assessment

1.Observation: Notice what is happening to you RIGHT NOW, such as thoughts, feelings and emotions in your body.

Be open to their coming and going without judgement for a short while

Allow these sensations to be there, just the way they are now in your mind and body

Try to let go of our habitual thinking pattern to want to change or get better

Tune in to their existence that are inside you

2.Enter to the breathing space

3.focus on the breath, the body, sounds, thoughts and feelings





- A. Breathing**
- B. Guided Imagery**
- C. The Raisin Meditation**
- D. Positive Thinking**

### **A. Mindful Breathing**

In this section we will cultivate our attention to the breath itself, and to the breathing space that we reside in.

Remember, you are not forcing or pushing the body to be in a certain way; but rather, with intention to nurture it with higher awareness to explore your physical and mental territories and limitations.

To begin, find a comfortable position which is either lying down or sitting up on a chair with firm support so that you have good posture and align our spine, shoulders and head readily. Your posture should be firm and erect but not stiff. Allow gentle adjustments as and when you need it to maintain a balanced poise throughout.

Now see if you can steer your intention to the movement of breath. I would like you to create a landscape of your body, that your breaths are traveling through all limbs, penetrating into the internal organs, and navigating on the surface of your skin.

On your *inhale*, notice the breath entering into the nostrils, through the windpipe downward and into the lungs. Send your awareness to the front, back and sides of the ribcage, the chest, the belly...expanding and opening

On your *exhale*, you begin to soften the body fully and let it be quiet and still. Notice the breath gradually recedes away from the body, releasing and emptying. Observe closely this cyclical pattern of in-breath and out-breath which makes your muscles and joints relax and soften....your breaths continue rising and falling naturally, filling and emptying, receiving and releasing, just as they are....

And now notice the brief pause between the in-breath and out-breath, where there is no breath, that there is complete calmness and silence in that moment.....adjoining the steady heartbeat, one beat at a time. Then you re-open the body and let the breath come back in again momentarily.





With the gentle flow of in-breath, out-breath and the subtle pause in between, you whisper in your ear, “I am here, breathing, feeling safe, calm, painless....I am as strong as I need to be”.... Allow the whispering voice repeat over and over again so that you can stay at the sensations for as long as you can.

Your mind is likely to wander again and again and again. You simply notice the nature of the wandering mind, and then you come back to the breaths. While you are breathing mindfully, you check in from time to time to see if you are alert in the present moment, your posture is well-balanced just as you started, you are awake without falling into the dark lethargic space, and that you are fully aligned to your intentions. Mindful breathing can help you explore your state of mind and the emotions that go with it, whether it is normal and regular, or abnormal and requires your special attentions. The patterns of your breaths are red flags that alert you when something has to be adjusted.

## **B. Guided Imagery**

With all guided imagery, the first step is set up an environment where you are able to release physical and mental tension so that you can fully indulge in the imagery that is created for you here. For now, set yourself up in a comfortable position, which can be sitting on a chair or lying on a bed or on the floor. Find extra supports if necessary such as a blanket, yoga blocks, soft pillows, etc.

The following imagery is designed to help ease pain. After the operation, you are likely to suffer from physical pain for quite some time now. I would like you to stay open to the sensations of pain, and then to be receptive to the possibility of being in comfort.

Begin to become aware of your breathing. You don't have to change anything or work at it, just notice it.....the steady rise and fall of your breath....breathing in with nourishment, life-force and innate power; breathing out with that which is no longer serving you, the worry, anxiety, or discomfort...

If thoughts, feelings and emotions should arise and draw for your attention, there's no need to engage or jump on them. Simply let them be as clouds in the sky, appearing and disappearing. Whenever you are distracted by them, there is no need to feel bad about it. Remember that your responses are normal, this is what your mind does. Just simply return to your pure attention of the inhalation and exhalation, the rising and falling, the nourishing and releasing.

Notice your muscles and joints begin to soften, your chest wide open.





Feel that the tension begins to drain away as you let your breath pass through your torso, across the shoulders, down the spine, along the arms and legs and into the finger tips and toes. Now that you become more and more relaxed, the tensions melt further away from all dimensions of your body: your throat, chest, ribs, belly, backside, hips, thighs, knees, calves, ankles, exiting whole outer shell of the body.

Until now, you may still have some ill spots and pain somewhere in your body that you just cannot shake off because perhaps of long-term ordeals in the past. I would like you to direct your full awareness to that particular region by placing your hands over there. Firstly, rub your hands gently together to generate a layer of heat, then you place them over that area. Feel that the warmth of your palms are penetrating into that region. Taking your breaths with you, you inhale deeply to send out vital power, you exhale deeply to send the unease away. Continue this process for a while and notice the subtle change, flux and stillness.

Now that you are comfortable and free of tension, imagine that you are in your favourite place which makes you feel relaxed, at ease and calm. Allow your inner vision to see a landscape composed of all sorts of natural scenes: the Sun, the Earth, water, wind and air. You watch as it comes into your sight...you are simply taking in the beauty of this place. With all your sensual organs switched on, visualize the colours, aromas, sounds, temperature, etc. of each element:

The **warmth** from the Sun,  
The **gentle blows** of the wind,  
The **fragrance** of the air,  
The **rattling sounds** of the vegetation. etc.

Allow your own sensations to go with the tranquility and peace of all scenes.

You become aware of the movement of air as birds flying across the sky: the whooshing sound of wings flapping in the air... and you see other birds drifting aloft on the wind and making soft landing on the water surface as they hunt for fish...

In the midst of all natural happenings, you are experiencing right now, you perhaps have a whiff of desire for support to help you deal with current discomfort and pain. Allow this desire to stay while you are enjoying the peace and quiet offered by the natural scenes we have arrived at. No need to engage in figuring why or what or how this desire come along. Simply let them pass and leave.





As you take one more look around at this place of beauty, peace and connection, note the colors, sounds, aromas and sensations --- all are readily available to you whenever you desire. Your mind and body know the way and will bring you here.

Notice the peaceful sensations within your body.....

Make the brief trip back to your chair, or bed or floor. Find yourself being at ease, relieved, calm, rejoiced, you are here.

Each time you allow this experience of nourishment and release to happen, you strengthen your willpower and you are reinforcing the inner ability to heal.

There is a new sense of comfort, refresh and renewal for pain has eased away and vitality reunites with your body.

### **C. The Raisin Meditation**

The purposes of this exercise are

- 1/ To increase your awareness and curiosity in one single object (raisin) and also during an activity
- 2/ To be mindful of every single action you take
- 3/ To have full attention to what is right in front of you, the here and now
- 4/ To take small steps and be slow in cultivating absolute focus

Now prepare a few raisins or alike such as nuts or dried fruits. Take a pen and a piece of paper to record all your sensations and their changes during the process.

There are 8 steps of this exercise. Each stage lasts between 20 and 30 seconds. Each step touches upon one of your basic senses, allowing you to be mindful to all your behaviours and subsequent reactions.

#### **Step 1 - Hold**

Take one raisin and hold it in the hand or between two fingers

Approach it as though you have ever seen it before

Feel the weight of it on your hand, and the subtle texture against the skin of your fingers or palm

#### **Step 2 - Sight**





Remember that you have never seen a raisin before  
Look at it carefully and with full attention  
Explore every feature of it such as the colour, the shadows, the hollow bits, the ridges on the surface of the raisin

### **Step 3 - Touch**

Gently rub the raisin between your index finger and thumb  
How does it feel on your skin? Is it dry or moist?  
Any textural contrasts such as stickiness, smoothness, squishiness, etc.

### **Step 4 - Smell**

Bring it to your nose and smell it  
What scent do you discover? No scent, a little or a distinctive smell?

### **Step 5 - Space**

Slowly bring it into your mouth and place it on your tongue before chewing it  
Simply explore the sensations of having it on your tongue before the next step

### **Step 6 - Taste**

Carefully take a small bite of the raisin  
Feel the small bits of the raisin start to fall apart inside your mouth as you continue to chew it  
Continue to chew it very slowly but do not swallow it just yet  
Can you identify the change in taste and texture before and during the bites?  
Perhaps discharge released from your saliva glands as the taste buds get stimulated?

### **Step 7 - Swallow**

Bring your awareness to the moment when you are ready to swallow the raisin  
Experience the full process from the instinct to swallow it to actually do it  
How do the tongue and throat react to the movements of the raisin?





Can you attune to your minute sensations as it slowly move down from your throat, along the esophagus and into the stomach? Notice every second of the swallowing process until it finally disappears from your mouth

### **Step 8 - Aftereffects**

Take a few moments to register the aftermath of this eating process

Is there an aftertaste?

What happens when the raisin disappears from your fingers to your mouth and finally to your stomach?

Do you have the urge to look for another raisin or a desire to eat something else?

Try to check in your instinctive responses. Can you catch yourself even in just a split second that you could only see the raisin but nothing else, no past stories, no future longings, no plans, nothing at all?

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### ***The New Way....***

*We can sometimes zoom in and out as though we were checking in through the camera aperture. Let's sit for a while in this way.*

*When our attention is taken away by random thoughts and stories, we know we can return to our breaths and reset our mind flow again.*

*But here is another option for you: To embrace the tensing, bracing and holding on. Open to whatever it is. Purposely direct your attention to where those feelings are the strongest and remain there. Perhaps even saying to yourself, it's OK, I can bear and cope with it, letting it just as it is. Let me sit with it, even be critical about it. Remember you are not trying to like your feelings. It's OK not to like them. I say to myself quietly, 'I breathe into the challenge, allow it to be the centre of my awareness, and I breathe out to let it go.'; 'I have compassion to my thoughts, I am curious about them but not rejecting, I am willing to explore them deeply with both softness and strength'. Continue this conversation until these sensations are no longer haunting you. Then you step forward to meet the challenges once again.*

*Then simply return to sitting and breathing.*

*Each in-breath you take is newness and nourishment.*

*Each out-breath you take is release and relief.*







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- Be open, curious, compassionate and determined.
- To be kind to ourselves
- To make smart choices

### D. Positive Thinking

Your beliefs are from demands or expectations imposed by yourself, others, or the world around you. The recurrent pattern of rigid, imperative statements can create pressure to your behaviours and then result in frustrations if those demands cannot be met.

On the contrary, you can reverse this negative pattern by changing the ways you express your intentions or goals. You acknowledge the inevitable fallback from time to time but you are also determined that your goals to restore from pain and past defeats will be attained.

This exercise will help you make better choices of thoughts and actions rather than making rigid demands. In doing so, you can move away from unrealistic self-imposed expectations and cultivate more flexible beliefs about living

Negative/Rigid/Unhealthy beliefs and statements	Positive/flexible/healthy beliefs and statements
1. I do not think I can do it	1. I will have a good try
2. That is too difficult	2. It is challenging but I believe I can do it
3. I give up, it's not helping or too much	3. I do not give up easily, I am resilient
4. I am too old for that	4. It is me regardless how old I am





Negative/Rigid/Unhealthy beliefs and statements	Positive/flexible/healthy beliefs and statements
5. I am not strong or flexible	5. I will still go for it
6. I do not think this is going to work on me	6. I am open to possibility of change
7. I am not good at it	7. I look forward to learning
8. I fail	8. I am worthy, I am not a loser

Next step after creating powerful, constructive and positive self-talks, we recite these statements as often as we can. Repetition is the key to self-empowerment. Just like our habitual way of thinking and behaving negatively, we repeat them again and again and they become automatic and believable. Likewise, if we repetitively commit to healthy beliefs and positive thoughts, we can reinforce our beliefs and goal-setting habits.

When we experience physical pain in our body, many of us would immediately find a solution to remove it or change it to a lesser degree at least; rather than switching our pattern into paying full attention inward to check our psyche in the first place.

As we grow, we must learn to confront our day-to-day challenges of stress and discomfort and to know the skills that tackle them properly. By integrating different modalities of mindful exercises, we will learn how to embrace negativities as a result of physical trauma and alike.





Discomfort, tensions, tightness, disturbance, etc. surrounds us whether we like them or not. By employing the exercises to keep our hand in, we will not be haunted by fear, self-doubt and negative talks. They are the solid skills that you can always apply in your own right.

### Takeaway messages

- \* Remind yourself that each experience is an experience without being good or bad, or a set target. You are here to explore and meet what comes to you.
- \* Start and finish a practice with fresh eyes and an open mind. Say to yourself that each time you practice, there is something different and special from the last one.
- \* If you find it difficult to concentrate, try to count your breaths: I breathe in for 1-2-3, I breathe out for 3-2-1... Repeat on the same counts for a few more cycles until your mind comes to rest again.
- \* Set a routine to practice, whichever part of the programme you think is best for you at the time, for however long you can manage. For just a minute, just move on to your seat and let it begin naturally.

