

PLAYING IT SAFE



Treating Pain Without Opioids

Therapeutic treatments can help you recover

You've probably heard a lot about opioids lately, and for good reason—the CDC estimates that more than 115 people die from opioid overdoses every day.

One of the biggest reasons for widespread misuse of these drugs is that they're both effective at short-term pain management and highly addictive.

Luckily, to combat what some now call the "opioid epidemic," researchers from the American College of Physicians (ACP) have published guidelines that promote alternative noninvasive and therapy-based pain treatments.

Although these guidelines recommend the use of opioids and other medications as a last resort, therapeutic treatments may help strengthen your body and help you heal naturally. However, you should always consult your physician for the best way to treat your pain.

Here are some common pain treatments based on the ACP's guidelines:

- **Use heat or ice packs to reduce pain and swelling.** Regulating how much blood flows into affected areas can be a simple and effective way to reduce pain.
- **Avoid overexertion.** Rest will allow any injured tissue and nerve roots to begin to heal. However, too much

rest can cause your muscles to weaken.

- **Exercise when possible.** Although exercising to relieve pain may sound strange, even low-intensity activity like stretching or walking can help strengthen your muscles and relieve pain. Consult with a health care or fitness professional to customize a safe and effective exercise routine for any severe or chronic pain.
- **Engage in relaxing activities such as yoga and meditation.** Research has shown that the mental aspect of physical pain can cause it to be much more intense than it would be otherwise.
- **Explore your options.** Talk with your doctor about alternative pain relievers and anti-inflammatory medications. You could also discuss when to use or how to wean off strong narcotics. Opioids should only be considered as a last resort.

Be safe and healthy on the job at
with these helpful tips
provided by **Brier Grieves
Agency.**

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