

Pain and Stress

SIMPLE SIDE

Pain is complex and multi dimensional. Many stressors can have an effect on someones current pain state and modern human living exposes us to many more concurrent and complex stressful situations and over longer periods of time leading to greater stress levels.

It can be good to help people recognise times pain gets better or worse and if stress could be involved and potentially reduced.

- An intense period at work?
- Less over the weekend or on holiday?
- Have they had adverse life events recently?

The simple story

"Lots of different things can be stressors, not just what we might think traditionally as stress and the systems involved with stress and pain are quite similar. The hormones involved with stress can be quite destructive on the body.

Imagine stress is like a big bucket with lots of different taps dripping into it. A work tap, a family tap, a money tap and maybe a physical activity tap too! This is fine when the taps are only dripping and the bucket is only half full. Sometimes the stress taps turn on full blast though, a deadline at work or a family member not being very well, then the buckets can overflow, making us more sensitive and this can increase the pain we experience"

Reading List

Understanding migraine through the lens of maladaptive stress responses: a model disease of allostatic load
Borsook Neuron. 2012

The stress model of chronic pain: evidence from basal cortisol and hippocampal structure and function in humans
Vachon Presseau. E Brain. 2013

Pain and stress. A new perspective.
Melzack. Psychosocial factors in pain 1999

The mature organism model
Louis Gifford 2002

