



Reframing Pain

Hosts: Rebecca Gillett, MS OTR/L and Julie Eller

Guest Speaker: Wesley Gilliam, Ph.D., Director of Mayo Clinic's Pain Rehabilitation Center

Pain is a fact of life for most people living with arthritis, and it can have far-reaching and sometimes surprising effects. Research has revealed that pain is a function of the brain. But that does not mean pain is all in your head! Pain acts as something like an alert system, so the brain can evaluate the level of risk.

But the injury or physical damage does not always align with the level of pain a person experiences, as in fibromyalgia. And in some chronic pain cases, the effects of pain cascade, undermining mental as well as physical health. Chronic pain especially can trigger anxiety and/or depression, which in turn can amp up pain levels, creating a vicious cycle.

Dr. Wesley Gilliam talks to Rebecca and Julie about how to talk to your doctor about your pain, and ways to manage it beyond taking medication – even if they seem counterintuitive, as with physical activity, which has been shown to ease pain and improve mood. Dr. Gilliam also discusses other measures people can take to take back their life despite pain, and who might benefit from seeking help from a pain psychologist.

[Dr. Gilliam](#) is a pain psychologist and clinical director of the Mayo Clinic Pain Rehabilitation Center in Rochester, Minnesota. He is board-certified in clinical psychology and serves on the faculty as assistant professor of psychology.

Additional Arthritis Foundation resources:

Read more about how pain works and what you can do to control it in **Reframe Your Pain**, a feature in the March-April 2020 issue of [Arthritis Today](#).

Learn more about how the Arthritis Foundation's [Walk With Ease program](#) and [Your Exercise Solution Tool](#) can help you ease into physical activities to help manage pain.

Help make a difference for yourself and others living with pain from arthritis by sharing your insights at arthritis.org/insights.

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