

Understanding Chronic Pain: Why It's Real, Why It's Not Your Fault, and Why There's Hope

From Dr. Chalfin

Your Pain Is Real

You've been through a lot. Maybe you've seen many doctors, tried medications, procedures, even surgeries — and you're still in pain. That can be frustrating, exhausting, and discouraging. **Please know: your pain is not in your head, and you are not making it up.** Pain is always real. But the source of pain is not always ongoing injury — it's your nervous system's response to perceived threat. Over time, the pain system can become overly sensitive, like an alarm that keeps going off even after the fire is out.

Why the Nervous System Stays “On”

After an injury, trauma, or long-term stress, the brain and spinal cord can get “stuck” in pain mode. This is called **central sensitization**. It's like your pain volume knob got turned up — and now even small movements, thoughts, or sensations can cause pain, spasm, make you terrified to move, and feel overwhelming. This is a **normal, common, and treatable** condition.

A New Way Forward

In the last few years, research has shown that **the nervous system can be retrained**. Just like physical therapy can help heal a joint, pain reprocessing and mind-body therapies can help turn the alarm system down. This doesn't mean your pain isn't real. It means we have more tools than ever to help your body feel safe again.

Resources to Explore

These are all optional — just take a look if and when you're ready:

- **Book:** *The Way Out* by Alan Gordon — a compassionate, research-backed guide to healing pain
- **App:** [Curable](#) — mind-body tools for chronic pain (audio-based and user-friendly)
- **Video:** [Tame the Beast](#) — 5-minute explainer on pain science
- **Website:** www.painreprocessingtherapy.com — find therapists and learn more

Final Thought

You are not broken. Your body is trying to protect you. And with the right support, your brain and body **can** unlearn pain. If you're open to it, we can explore these tools together — alongside any other care you're receiving. There is **hope**, and you don't have to go through it alone.