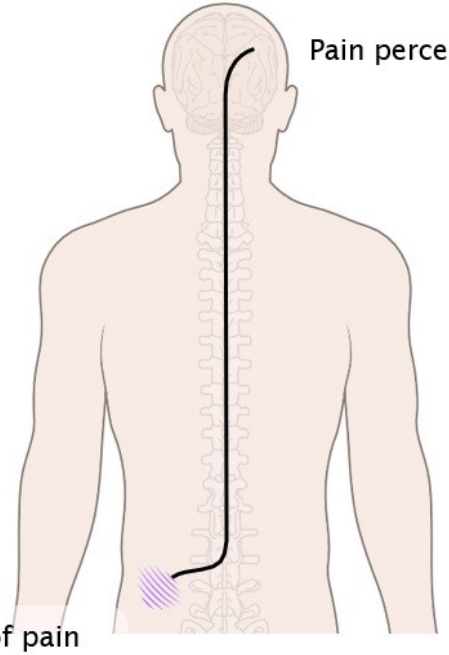
Supplementary measures to combat pain

Nerves are like electric wires. They carry a signal that tells you when something hurts. This signal goes from your body to your brain. It is in the brain that this signal becomes the feeling of pain.

The spinal cord is like a switch or a traffic light. It can slow down or block some pain signals, which helps you feel less pain.



Example of triggering of pain

Action that influences pain perception

- **Relaxation,** for example, through listening to music, particular rituals or relaxation exercises (e.g. progressive muscle relaxation, which you can learn in courses).
- **Indulging your sense of humour** will often help you relax.
- **Use your imagination:** to conjure up empowering mental images from your memory, and linger in them for a moment.
- **Acupuncture and reflexology**, used in addition to your pain management, can relieve distress and pain.
- **Cognitive behavioural therapy** can be helpful in dealing with pain and regaining control and confidence.
- **Yin yoga** is a gentle method of yoga that focuses on breathing and meditation and is suitable for everyone. Yin yoga exercises help you to calm down, connect with your body and relax your body.

Action that influences pain perception

- **Heat application:** by means of heat pads, hot packs or warm wraps. Heat promotes muscle relaxation, but only works for a short time. Consult the treatment team before applying.
- **Cold application:** with cold packs, cooling ointments or cold wraps. Cold damps down the pain stimulus and reduces pain perception. The temperature of the cool wraps should be only about 10 °C below skin temperature (store cold packs only in the refrigerator, therefore, and not in the freezer compartment). Consult the treatment team before applying. Do not use cold applications (e.g. cold packs) after radiotherapy or in case of reduced blood circulation (ischaemia).
- **Massage therapy** by trained professionals: massages promote muscle relaxation, loosen the connective tissue, influence the nervous system and help in mental relaxation.