

Live Well with Pain news

for people with pain and those who support them

ISSUE 21 | OCTOBER 2025 | For resources to help you live well with pain, visit: livewellwithpain.co.uk

Welcome to this Autumn edition of the Live Well with Pain newsletter, in which we bring you good news from the Health Service Journal Patient Safety Awards, a Q&A with a very familiar member of the Live Well with Pain team and much, much more. But first, those awards...

‘Highly commended’

It began with an incredible 456 incredible entries, each one (as the organisers say) “full of ideas to make care safer, smarter, and better for patients.”

From there, 216 exceptional projects – including, of course, Live Well with Pain – made it through to the shortlist. And then, after much deliberation, there were 25 incredible winners!

Live Well with Pain, along with colleagues from Joined Up Care Derbyshire, Health Innovation East Midlands, University of Durham, St George’s University Hospital and United Hospitals Birmingham were Highly Commended in the ‘Best use of integrated care and partnership working’ category, which sums up the Live Well with Pain approach nicely, when you think about it. Many congratulations to the team on an outstanding achievement.

‘The HSJ Awards are not just a celebration of success stories but also a platform to shape the future of the NHS’

From left to right: Lisa Towle (Health Innovation East Midlands), Kate Hardiman (Heath Innovation East Midlands) and Katrina Hughes (St Georges University Hospital), our partners, at the awards.



Here at newsletter HQ we’re always keen to hear your suggestions. So why not drop us a line, let us know what you think and share your ideas? It couldn’t be simpler – just email info@livewellwithpain.co.uk
Got a story for us? Our next issue is out in January. Deadline for submissions is 31 December.

News from around the pain community



Pain education for the nation

Billed as 'support for EVERYONE affected by pain', Flippin' Pain and friends present this one-off event on Wednesday, 15 October (17.30 - 19.30) with input from, among others, former Live Well with Pain Lived Experience trainer Louise Trewern and Nikki Jones of the spin-off Footsteps Festival.

What they describe as their 'biggest event yet' is taking place in Newcastle but being live-streamed across the UK to make it as accessible as possible. It is aimed primarily at those living with pain, but is open to anyone who may be interested – and is of course free to attend!

For more information on the event and to book a place [visit their Eventbrite page](#).

HOW IS PAIN AFFECTING YOUR LIFE?

Try Live Well with Pain's new **Health and Wellbeing Check** and discover your next step



British Pain Society webinars

The British Pain Society has a range of exciting upcoming events and opportunities, including the following webinars:

- Thursday 16 October 2025, 19:00–20:30
Pain and Long-Covid Syndrome: Mindfulness-based lifestyle medicine for chronic conditions
- Wednesday 12 November 2025, 18.30-end
Staying the course – engaging and retaining people with lived experience of pain in the CRIISP programme: lessons for future research
- Thursday 11 December 2025, 19.00-end
Integrating effective supported self-management into services (practical experiences and personal journeys)

You can sign up for forthcoming webinars, as well as watch recordings of previous webinars, on the [BPS website's webinars page](#).

Headaches conference

The BPS Headache Special Interest Group is holding a one-day conference on Friday 14 November, 09:00–17:00 at the Royal College of Anaesthetists. The conference aims to:

- enhance health care professionals' knowledge and confidence in the diagnosis, investigation, and management of primary headache disorders
- provide updates on recent advances in headache research and emerging therapeutic options
- support the practical application of headache treatments through hands-on clinical skills training.

Registration is open now, and [you can book here](#).

News from around the pain community



Live Well with Pain Conference 2026

One day conference for professionals

Footsteps to Change brings together leading experts, health professionals, workplace wellbeing innovators, and people with lived experience of pain. Together, we'll explore why a prevention agenda is needed for primary care. Also how pain management, health trainers and wellbeing programmes can shape a future where people feel supported, empowered, and in control of their lives.

Friday 27th March

THE OCULUS WARWICK UNIVERSITY

£105

CONFIRMED SPEAKERS



Prof. Roger Knaggs
British Pain Society



Dr Tim Williams
Peak Health Coaching



Prof. Tamar Pincus
Southampton University



Dr Asim Suleman
Bradford and Airedale
NHS



Prof. Cormac Ryan
Teesside University



Dr Nicole Tang
Warwick University



Dr Benjamin Ellis
Imperial Healthcare Trust



Richmond Stace
The Pain Coach

Book now
www.footsteps2change.co.uk

Training news

Practitioners: boost your skills this winter, with our new workshops

Live Well with Pain's training portfolio is growing. Our accredited Ten Footsteps Programme for practitioners is now being complemented by a series of shorter online workshops.

Designed for practitioners working with chronic pain, the half-day sessions equip you with the skills and confidence you need to support people learning to self-manage their pain.

Better Sleep, Better Health

Thursday 6 November
2025
10.00 - 14.00 (via Zoom)

Guiding people to develop better sleep patterns and wellbeing despite the pain.

[Book here](#)

Activity and Pain

Thursday 11 December
2025
9.30 - 13.30 (via Zoom)

Helping people to be as active as they want to be with pain.

[Book here](#)

Nutrition in Practice

Monday 26 January
2026
10.00 - 13.00 (via Zoom)

Gain the skills and confidence to integrate nutrition into your clinical or community-based practice.

[Book here](#)

More info and booking

Each workshop will be delivered via Zoom and the cost is £60pp for the Sleep and Activity workshops, and £45pp for Nutrition in Practice (£35pp if booked before the end of October).

Bookings can be made via Eventbrite using the links above or if you would prefer to be invoiced, please use this [workshop booking link](#). Group discounts are available for 3+ participants from the same organisation. If you would like more information, please email Claire at lwwp.training@gmail.com.

Health and Wellbeing Check Tool

Exploring how pain affects your health – and your life

A well-respected self-assessment resource for persistent pain been turned into an online interactive tool, which has recently been launched on the Live Well with Pain website.

Live Well with Pain's Health and Wellbeing Check is a multiple-choice questionnaire designed for people living with pain and the practitioners who support them. It helps them understand more about their pain and its impact as well as prioritise the changes they want to make so they can get on with life despite the pain.

The tool has been in use for a number of years as a PDF that clinicians print out and give to their patients. Often used as a first step to exploring how persistent pain is affecting a person's life, the completed forms are also useful in developing a shared understanding of a person's own priorities for change. This is a key step in a person's self-management journey, ensuring that clinician and patient are 'on the same page' as they learn the skills they need to 'live well despite the pain.'

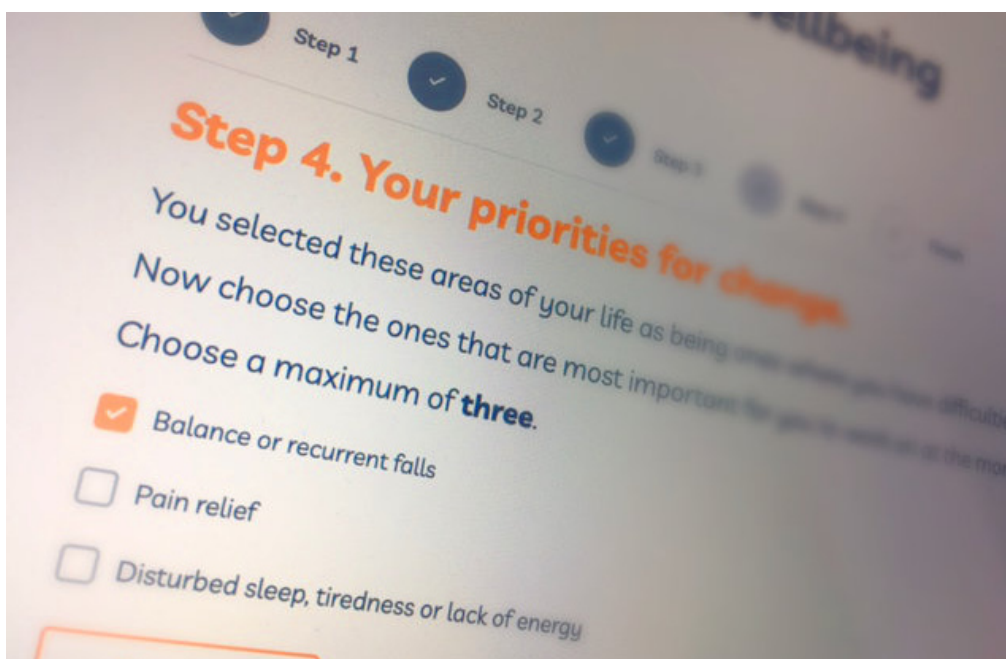
Now Live Well with Pain has launched an online interactive version of the Health and Wellbeing Check tool.

This online version promises to be a game changer, especially in terms of getting the best out of precious appointment time. The interactive multiple-choice questionnaire can help patients understand:

- more about their pain and how it affects them;
- the main obstacles to improving their quality of life;
- the changes they can make in order to enjoy life despite the pain.

For health care professionals the tool can perform a number of vital functions:

- it engages the patient in their own care which is vital to successful self-management;
- the completed data can help with condition management and medication reviews;
- aggregating results across a cohort can provide evidence of the impact of chronic pain on the local population.



Left: The new interactive tool helps patients to prioritise the changes they want to make so they can get on with life despite the pain

Health and Wellbeing Check Tool

Immediate impact

This latest resource from the Live Well with Pain stable has proved an immediate success. Within hours of being launched the tool was being viewed, used and reviewed at an astonishing rate.

Of the approximately 2,300 practitioners who received the email announcing its launch, over 50% opened it and there were over 2,700 clicks through to the new tool during the first two days alone: a 'frankly phenomenal' click-through rate, as webmaster David Andrassy put it.

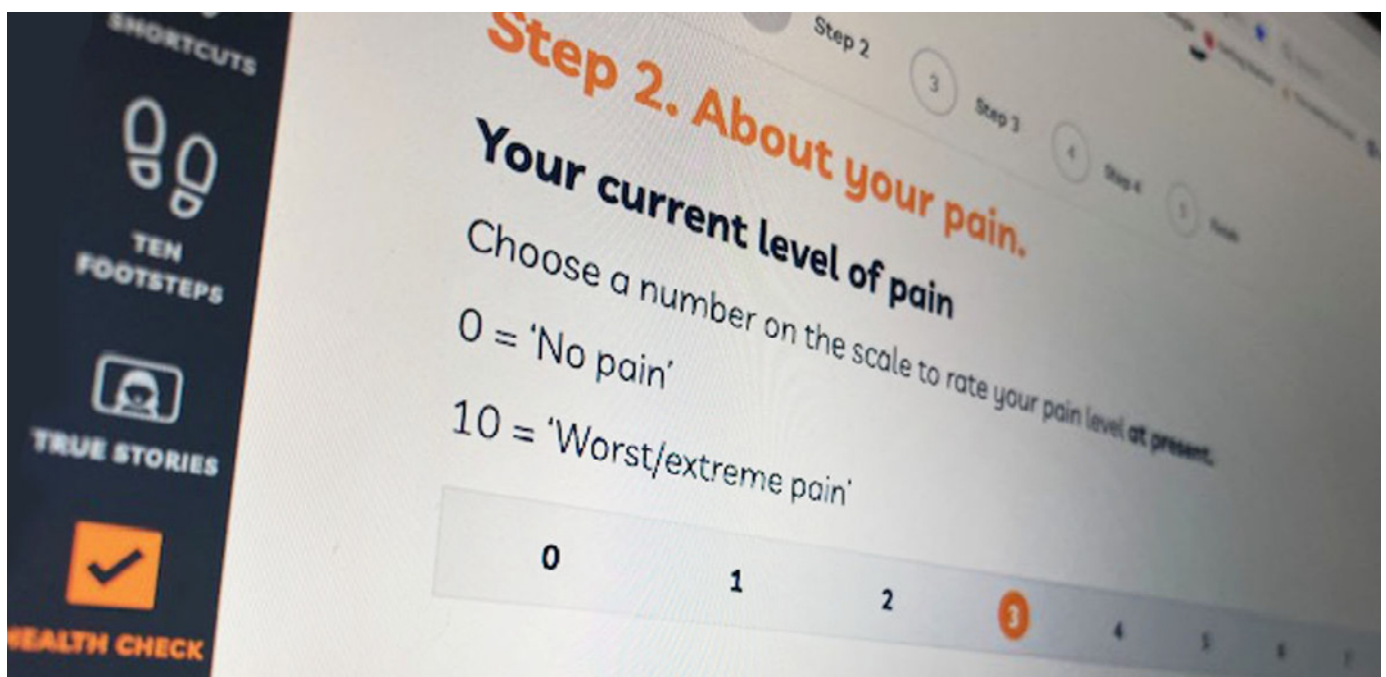
Since its launch a month ago, the online Health and Wellbeing Check tool has been completed more than 600 times.

It's early days, of course, but there are signs that this resource is going to be of enormous value both to people with pain and health care professionals alike.

[Try the new Health and Wellbeing Check tool for yourself here](#)

The Health and Wellbeing Check tool – at a glance

- The Health and Wellbeing Check is completely anonymous, and only takes a few minutes to complete.
- There are four steps to complete. When you've finished all four steps, it will give you some suggested links to follow for information and tips in the areas of life that are most important to you.
- You can save your completed Health and Wellbeing Check as a PDF.
- People are finding this useful as they can then share this with their health care practitioner, to help them plan their self-management journey.
- Alternatively you can simply keep the PDF to review it yourself at later date.
- Top tip: to get the most out of your Health and Wellbeing check, why not try completing it more than once – say every month or so? That way you can track your own progress and successes on your 'pain self-management journey.'



Interview

Q&A with Laura Hissey

Dr Laura Hissey, we're sure, needs no introduction to most readers of this newsletter. Lead Trainer on the Ten Footsteps Programme for many years and (with Dr Emma Davies) organiser of the first (and hugely successful) Live Well with Pain conference earlier this year, Laura has a Footsteps pedigree like no other. But how did she first become involved in the programme? What did she want to be when growing up? And what's Laura's guilty pleasure? Read on to find the answers...

To begin, perhaps you'd like to say a little about yourself and how you came to be involved in the Live Well with Pain programme?

I'm Dr Laura Hissey, a Health Psychologist who specialises in Pain Management. Alongside my role at Live Well with Pain, I'm the Pain Psychology Lead at University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Trust which is a secondary care pain service where I work as part of large multidisciplinary team of pain specialists who provide specialist assessment and intervention to people living persistent pain in Birmingham.

I'm also the Clinical Implementation Lead for Live Well with Pain, however most people will know me from delivering the Ten Footsteps training alongside the Live Well with Pain clinicians and Lived Experience Trainers. When I'm not delivering training, I spend my time at Live Well with Pain looking at how the Ten Footsteps can be applied clinically, and I link with services nationally to support projects and trials to improve the delivery of care for people with pain in the UK.

I got involved with Live Well with Pain back in 2021 through being introduced by a mutual colleague and I began supporting and



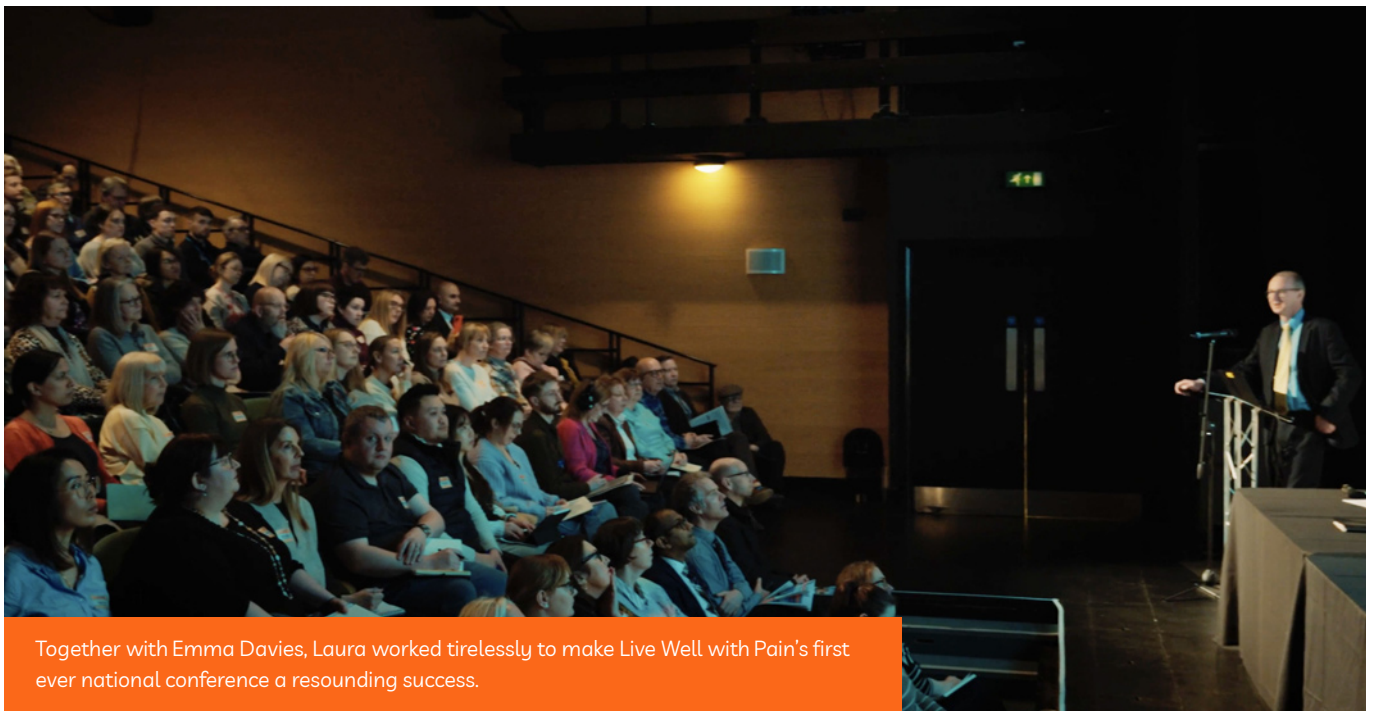
developing the Ten Footsteps Training Programme. Things have evolved hugely since then and we now have a large, highly experienced multi-disciplinary training team who continue to deliver our accredited Ten Footsteps Training Programme to people working in Pain Management across the country.

What first interested you about Psychology and (if it's not the same thing) what persuaded you to pursue a career in the subject?

At the time I was choosing my A-level subjects, Psychology was up and coming and very popular so it was more curiosity than anything else. I liked the idea that Psychology was about human behaviour and that it could essentially be applied to any person and any situation.

I could see the real-life value in understanding human behaviour on a deeper level and discovering why people think and act the way they do. I felt this was something that would be useful in any future career.

Interview



Together with Emma Davies, Laura worked tirelessly to make Live Well with Pain's first ever national conference a resounding success.

Being Psychology Lead for an NHS Pain Service in the West Midlands sounds like a very demanding role. What does a typical day at work look like? And how does having the Ten Footsteps resources help?

My NHS role can certainly be challenging but it is just as rewarding. I know that pain can have a profound impact on people living with it and those that support them. Every day, I see people of all ages from all backgrounds that are experiencing pain-related distress. It is a privilege for me to support them in their adjustment to living with pain and support them to improve their quality of life.

One of the most exciting aspects of my role is that no two days are the same. My days are incredibly varied and often require different types of work. This can involve clinical work, teaching and training, attending meetings, service development and leadership responsibilities such as providing clinical supervision and managing

psychology service provision.

Clinically, I use the Ten Footsteps resources in my one-to-one clinics and also within the Pain Management Programmes I lead. The mixture of written handouts, videos and the new interactive Live Well with Pain Health and Wellbeing Check tool are fantastic to help reinforce key messages within self-management. As most clinicians will know, consultations are often time pressured and so having an information hub in the form of the Live Well with Pain website which provides easy access to evidence-based resources to which you can signpost people is extremely useful.

Despite being so busy, you organised (with Dr Emma Davies) the first-ever Live Well with Pain conference earlier this year. The event was a huge success and is all set to be repeated next year. What did you learn from this year, and what – if anything – will you do differently next year?

We did! Emma and I put a huge amount of time into organising the conference and we were delighted to see how successful it was. Seeing all those health care professionals and practitioners sat in the lecture theatre with one shared goal was incredible and made it all worthwhile. My biggest learning on the day as a clinician was the importance of providing adapted pain management for specific populations of patients. There were some fantastic sessions on pain management for non-English speaking groups as well as creative pain management for those with more diverse learning needs. It gave me a lot to think about in terms of developing the Pain Psychology services that we offer in Birmingham to make them more inclusive and accessible to a wider and more diverse population.

As a conference organiser, without a doubt the key learning (and I am sure that Emma will agree) was to allow more time for unexpected events.

Interview

There were a lot of late nights for us both in the weeks leading up to the conference! Hence the conference planning started a lot earlier this year and I am delighted to say that the conference booking is now open for Live Well with Pain's second national conference which will be taking place on Friday 27th March 2026 at The Oculus Centre, Warwick University. You can find out more by visiting our [conference website](#).

And now for the 'fun' questions! What was your burning ambition as a child?

As a child my burning ambition was to be an Olympic show jumper. From a very young age, my passion was horses which was ignited by going to feed the two horses in the field near to my parents' house. From the age of five to 14, I rode horses. Whilst I did compete in local show jumping competitions, I never quite made it to Olympic level!

What is top of your to-be-read pile at the moment?

The top of my to read pile is actually your book Tim, *Where Does It Hurt?*

A memoir of life with chronic pain. I have learnt a great deal from working alongside yourself and our other Lived Experience Trainers at Live Well with Pain. I am always fascinated to hear your real-life accounts of navigating a life with pain as well as hearing what you need from HCPs to help you manage effectively.

One of the things that really sticks in my mind from hearing our LET stories is how what can sometimes feel like a potentially daunting conversation for a clinician such as talking about the limitations of medical cure for pain and the need for a self-management approach, can actually (and has been) a catalyst and life changing conversation for someone living with pain. That has without a doubt made me a better clinician.

What piece of music is currently your ear-worm?

It's a song called 'Golden' off K Pop Demon Hunters which my daughters are obsessed with. We have it on repeat at home and I've

heard it a million times now; I'm sure other parents can relate! It's very catchy and I've been singing in my head for over two weeks now.

Guilty pleasure?

My guilty pleasure must be my taste in music. I absolutely love Bryan Adams. I went to see him recently at Warwick Castle and it was great. I have contacted him to ask if he can come and play at the conference dinner but, unsurprisingly, he hasn't replied.

Thanks Laura, and best of luck to both you and Emma in planning next year's Live Well with Pain conference.

If you have a suggestion for someone we should quiz in the Q&A, do let us know. Drop us an email at info@livewellwithpain with "Newsletter Q&A" in the subject line and we'll get creative with our questions.

**Live Well with Pain's
second annual
one-day conference
will be at the Oculus
Centre, Warwick University on Friday 27 March 2026**



Find out more at footsteps2change.co.uk

Motivation



Run for it!

Professor Cormac Ryan of Teesside University was one of the speakers at last year's conference, and it will be no surprise to those who heard his entertaining and erudite presentation that he has been invited back for 2026. Earlier this year Cormac ran the London Marathon, raising funds for Pain Concern as well as awareness of the *Flippin' Pain* campaign. Here he tells us about the motivation and preparation for the event, drawing parallels with successful pain management and concluding that the approach to both requires a similar mindset. Cormac writes...

When I first announced I was going to do it a friend of mine asked if I was going to do the training or if I was just going to "have a go." This question really got to one of the key underlying reasons I chose to do the marathon (beyond the aforementioned good causes). The answer was "yes", I was going to do the training because you have to practise what you preach.

If I encountered someone with persistent pain and they were getting fed up with being on a biomedical conveyor belt of scans, medications and surgeries, and wanted to approach their pain differently, take a more

biopsychosocial approach, what would I recommend? I guess I would recommend the same things that I did in preparation for the marathon.

No quick fix for pain

First, resist the temptation of a quick fix for persistent pain – it rarely ends up as the correct path. In my case that would mean not doing the training and just assuming the race will be fine.

But it would not have been fine; there is no way I would have finished without putting in lots of training.

Motivation

Get yourself a guide

Second, get yourself a good guide! This might be a person but it can also be good information from trusted sources – for people with pain that can be Live Well with Pain or Flippin' Pain. For a guy about to run the London Marathon, it was the London Marathon website itself which was full of great information.

Good idea: get the gear

Third, get the right gear. If you are in pain and you want to adopt a certain positive behaviour like physical activity for example, then you should get yourself the right equipment, like a nice comfortable pair of trainers – so for Christmas I asked for running gear including a running torch as I knew there would be lots of training in the dark and without the right gear it would have been near impossible to train adequately.

Support network

Fourth, get your support network in place. People with pain benefit so much from the right support from family, friends and health professionals who know what they are going through and know how to help. In my case without my wife taking on lots more of the parental duties allowing me to go out more and train, I could never have done the training needed for the marathon. Similarly, without my colleagues on the Flippin' pain campaign helping me with advertising on social media I would never have achieved my funding target (we raised over £2,300).



Cormac at Live Well with Pain's conference earlier this year

Change your lifestyle

Fifth, if you've got pain, making some positive lifestyle changes can really help – improving what you eat, getting more sleep and being more active. In the same way preparing for a marathon is not just about getting more active, but it is about eating better and sleeping better to help you rest and recover well between sessions.

One more vital ingredient

Finally, it is about pacing. For people with pain pacing is a vital ingredient to slowly but surely increasing their ability to do things and engage in the meaningful activities they want to do. For marathon running it is no different. In the training it's all about slowly but steadily increasing the distances you run and, on the day, keeping a steady pace that will make sure you last the course – much like managing persistent pain, marathon running is (you guessed it!) a 'marathon not a sprint!'

Cormac successfully completed the marathon in five hours and eight minutes (a mere three hours and six minutes, he points out, behind the fastest male runner!). And if you'd like to follow his lead and do something similar, Pain Concern still have some charity spaces to fill for next year's event (Sunday 12th April 2026). If you are interested in taking part yourself, or know someone who may be, please get in touch at fundraising@painconcern.org.uk More information on the event can be found here.




How can I run the London Landmarks Half Marathon to fundraise for Pain Concern?

Apply for a Pain Concern charity place – commit to raising funds and we'll support you every step of the way.

Already have a ballot place? Choose to make your miles count by fundraising for Pain Concern.

Runners will also receive:
 A Pain Concern running vest,
 Fundraising tips and materials,
 Support from our friendly team,
 The satisfaction of making a real difference!

SUNDAY 12th APRIL 2026
fundraising@painconcern.org.uk

On the back

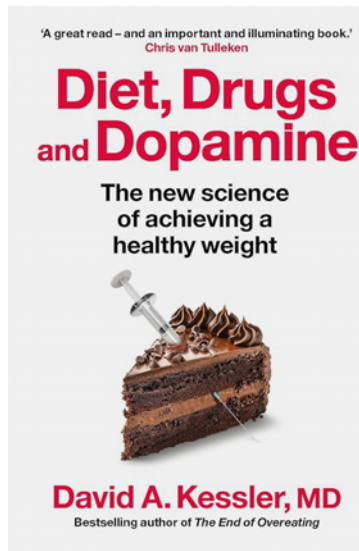
Bookshelf

Diet, Drugs and Dopamine

by David Kessler

Published by New River Books

There's much talk at the moment about diet drugs, something dealt with in a new book by David Kessler, former Dean of two US medical schools as well as Chief Scientific Officer to the White House during the Covid-19 pandemic and the man who ran the US Food and Drug Administration for many years.



The author knows whereof he speaks. Kessler not only has the scientific chops to speak on the subject, but the lived experience too, having recently used weight-loss drugs (for which he urges caution) to shed the over 40lbs he gained through a lifetime of high-stress work linked to over-eating.

And what he concludes is that it's not laziness or lack of self-control that causes the problem, but a food industry scientifically engineering its products to create addiction. These processed foods, Kessler argues, hijack our brain's reward system, altering the neurohormones that regulate blood sugar, creating highs and lows and compulsive cravings.

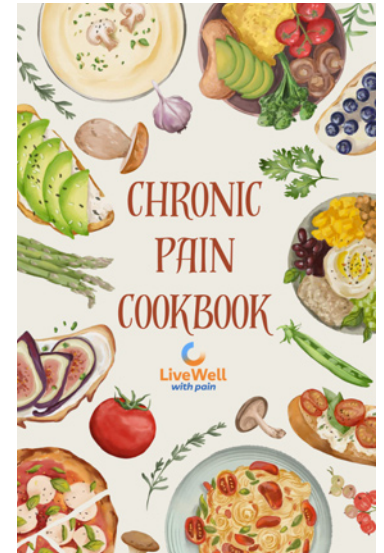
The answer to all this is pretty obvious and starts as soon as we next go shopping. So why not use Live Well with Pain's new cookbook (see right) to plan some healthy and nutritious meals and make that the basis of your shopping list?

Chronic Pain Cookbook

Available as a digital download

FREE from Live Well with Pain

Want to change your diet but don't know how? Why not start by downloading the Chronic Pain Cookbook. It is the number one downloaded resource on our website and is full of simple-to-make, great value recipe ideas. They've been specially designed to include the kinds of ingredients that can benefit people with persistent pain.



[You can download the Chronic Pain Cookbook here.](#)

One of the most popular recipes in the Chronic Pain Cookbook is **Overnight Oats with Berries and Seeds**.

The oats are good at supporting stable blood sugar levels and reducing inflammation. The berries also help combat inflammation, and the chia seeds contain Omega-3 Fatty Acids which is very beneficial for the management of chronic pain.

Ingredients

80g rolled oats
250ml almond milk
100g mixed berries (frozen or fresh)
1 tbsp chia seeds
1 tsp honey (optional)

Method

Step 1: In a container, combine the oats, almond milk, berries and chia seeds.
Step 2: Sweeten with honey if desired and mix well.
Step 3: Cover and refrigerate overnight. Stir and serve.