

Pain Relief - The use of Heat to relieve pain.

Pain relief is always a big topic with everyone dealing with pain in their own way. No 'one way' suits everyone in the same way as different medications work for different people even in the 'pain' is similar.

Here a few ideas of products that use heat that can assist in treating muscle type pain.

Heat Pads and Thermal Heat Pads



There are several types of heat pad. The most common is probably the one that you can put in the microwave, filled with wheat germ or crushed flowers often smelling of lavender to help you relax. These are simply to use and can be safely put on any area of the body, although if it is on your back you will need someone else's assistance.

The problem I find with these is that they are heavy. I have tried several times to rest them around my neck when my shoulders and neck are in spasm., but the weight of the pad is often too much when my shoulders are already very sensitive to touch., and I find that they slip off of my shoulder easily.



There are some that are especially made for the shoulder areas and shaped in this way and may be easier to use than the 'long' version



Another alternative is the **Electric Thermo Pads**

These are generally fairly light weight, but have to be plugged into the mains in order to heat up. This restricts where you can sit in order to be by a suitable plug.

However, if you can get the set up right, then are very good on aching backs, shoulders etc.

You can also buy Infrared **Heated Devices** to assist pain.



These come in various forms. You can buy an infrared panel that can sit on a table or a bedside cabinet etc., often with a swivel base, to point it in the direction of a pain on your back or side etc. They have a fairly large heated panel so are good for larger areas such as backs.



For more precise pinpointing of the pain, you can buy the **hand held devices** which often also incorporate a simple massage as well. Some come with longer handles that bend near the top of the handle so that you can reach areas more easily. Again they are electric so need to be plugged in, but usually have a fairly long lead so are quite flexible in where you can use them.

The final form of heat pad that I am reviewing is the **'Stick on Heat Pads'**



There are various makes to choose from. Heat pads are perfect for those times when you need a steady supply of heat. Unlike other heat pads which are bulky and visible, this form of heat pads are discreet, portable and last a lot longer. Use them to comfort tired muscles. Take them outdoors or anywhere you'll feel the cold.

It means that if you are out and about and feel a real pain where heat can comfort it, you can stick one of these pads onto your clothing over the area of pain to keep it in place. They come back off without any issues to the clothes and the pain relief can last from 1 hour up to 12 hours as claimed by some manufacturers. The heat is released in various ways, from pulling a strip to simply taking the pad out of its protective bag.

They can however only be used once so are a throw away item, but are good to carry for 'emergencies' or to wear when you need to be out and about, but need the comfort of the heat to help you deal with pain. Especially good for back pain.

Hot Water Bottles and the Microwave Version



The good old Hot Water bottle is still worth consideration in using heat to assist with pain., and many people still take one to bed.

However they are bulky and if you are using one to try and put in on a specific area, this is not easy as you would normally have to hold it in place., especially if on a leg, an ankle, shoulder etc., otherwise it would simply fall off



Another version of this old favourite is the **Microwave Hot Water bottle.**

This often comes in a similar shape, but slightly smaller, and contains some form of liquid that heats up in the microwave. The benefit of these of these type of bottles is that they are far flatter and more flexible so easier to place on that painful spot. I have even tucked down the back of my trousers when lower back pain is niggling me.



Finally on a similar vein to the Microwave Hot water bottle is the **Back Wrap.**

Heated up again in the microwave, these pads wrap around the back and fix at the front with velcro fastenings.

With all these items, please be sure to read the manufacturers instruction for use. This site does not recommend any specific makes

All items are widely available through retail shops or on-line