

**Non-Pharmacological Nursing Interventions for Acute Pain** For patients with mild pain, non-pharmacological nursing interventions for acute pain can sometimes be very effective.

**Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS)** This technique uses a special device that produces a mild electrical current through the skin via external electrodes. When using this nursing intervention for acute pain, the nurse must remember to let the patient select the type of music that they prefer to listen to.

**Heat** The application of a heating pad or hot water bottle may stimulate the closure of the pain gates, reducing pain and discomfort. It involves the absorption of essential oils through the skin or olfactory system to reduce pain, nausea, muscle tension, anxiety, and depression. One review of nine randomized controlled trials was split nearly 50/50: Five studies found that aromatherapy could be effective for postoperative pain, and four found no statistical difference associated with aromatherapy use (13).

**Guided Imagery** This nursing intervention for acute pain involves the nurse sitting close to the patient and helping them to create a calming and relaxing image in their mind.

**Acupuncture** Acupuncture is also a traditional Chinese modality that has recently gained popularity in the United States and other Western countries.

**Aromatherapy** The use of essential oils is an ancient therapeutic modality that dates back hundreds of years and has gained popularity in recent years. Like applying heat, the nurse must carefully and frequently assess the patient's skin to ensure that injury does not occur and remove the ice if the patient feels numbness, aching, or burning. If the nurse applies the heating pad, the site should be reassessed frequently to reduce the possibility of injury. The machine produces a buzzing or tingling sensation, the intensity of which can be controlled by the patient in response to the pain they are feeling. They can also work well in conjunction with pain medications and other nursing interventions for acute pain. It is believed that the insertion of small needles into the skin at specific points helps to stimulate endorphin release and trigger other pain-relieving changes in the brain.

**Massage** Massage is a great technique to soothe tense muscles and promote relaxation and sleep.

**Acupressure** Acupressure is a traditional Chinese modality that has been used for generations. Acupuncture is quite safe but should only be performed by a licensed practitioner. Studies on the effectiveness of aromatherapy vary.

**Distraction** Distraction is quite an effective and simple nursing intervention for acute pain. Distraction is one of those factors that can help to close the pain gates, which reduces the experience of pain. This touch stimulation may trigger the release of endorphins or help to close the pain gates responsible for pain transmission. It allows the patient to visualize physiological responses and eventually learn to control them. This treatment does require a physician's order, and the nurse should help the patient with hair removal if needed before applying the electrodes. By applying pressure to certain points on the body, the belief is that you can help to restore the flow of energy and balance throughout the body. Though acupressure is mostly considered safe, there are some points that should not be stimulated in pregnant women as they might stimulate labor. Press firmly and use an up-and-down or circular movement for several minutes. In fact, the presence of strong sensory input can help a person be unaware of their pain. It may also stimulate the release of endorphins, which also reduce pain. Cold can relieve inflammation and pain, and promotes healing. This technique is particularly beneficial for people with headaches or muscle tension. Make sure to stop or ease up pressure if the motion causes worsening pain or discomfort. The needles are then removed, and the treatment is repeated several times. Research

about effectiveness is mixed, but it may be worth a try for patients with complicated or chronic pain. Music Music therapy works similarly to distraction. Cold Applying a cold or ice pack works similarly. It works best over inflamed joints. Ice can be particularly effective before a needle puncture or injection. Biofeedback Biofeedback is a type of behavioral therapy that is taught to the patient over several weeks. The needles are left in place for 10 to 30 minutes at a time so the patient can rest. It gives the person something else to focus on apart from their discomfort. The nurse speaks quietly, helping the patient to concentrate on the image and relax. Remember the gate theory of pain? The patient should be reminded to not lie directly on the heat source due to the risk of burns.