

## ? Memory of Pain



### ✿ Key Learnings

- **Memory is central to learning**, helping us store and recall information for future use.
- Repetition strengthens neural pathways—“**Neurons that fire together, wire together.**”
- The brain builds **automatic pathways** based on repeated experiences.
- While experiencing pain, **places, activities, and emotions** experienced at the time become associations that may trigger pain in the future.
- We often **anticipate pain** based on past experiences.
- The brain’s **bias toward remembering negative events** (like pain) can shape behaviour and avoidance patterns.
- Fortunately, **neuroplasticity** means we can reshape these pathways and create new, more helpful ones.

### ✂ Skills to Practise

- **Recall neutral or positive experiences**—try starting a gratitude journal.
- When doing something that tends to increase pain, consider:
  - **Breathing techniques** before, during, and after the activity
  - **Modifying sensory input** you can control:
    - Sound/music
    - Light
    - Smells
    - Touch (e.g., tap, rub, or use TENS)
  - **Identifying and adjusting thinking patterns** that arise in these situations

## ? Quiz: Memory of Pain

**Question 1:** What does the phrase “Neurons that fire together, wire together” mean?

- a. Pain neurons are permanently connected
- b. Repeated experiences strengthen neural pathways
- c. Pain always leads to emotional trauma
- d. Neural pathways cannot be changed once formed

**Explanation:** Repetition strengthens connections between neurons, making responses like pain more automatic over time. **Answer:** B

**Question 2:** Why can pain-related memories make future pain more likely?

- a. Because the brain ignores past experiences
- b. Because pain memories are stored in the spinal cord
- c. Because anything we experience repeatedly becomes easier to recall
- d. Because pain memories are erased quickly

**Explanation:** Our brain lays down memories of our pain experiences and learns associations of pain and other factors, which can trigger pain responses in similar future situations. **Answer:** C

**Question 3:** What is a helpful skill for reshaping pain-related memories?

- a. Avoiding all activities that previously caused pain
- b. Repeating negative thoughts to desensitise yourself
- c. Ignoring pain and pushing through it
- d. Actively remembering neutral or positive experiences

**Explanation:** Focusing on positive and neutral experiences helps create new, more helpful neural pathways. **Answer:** D

**Question 4:** What is a neurotag?

- a. A component of a neurosignature linked to specific experiences
- b. A type of pain medication
- c. A memory stored in the spinal cord
- d. A muscle group affected by pain

**Explanation:** Neurotags make up neurosignatures, a complex connection of nerves in the brain and spinal cord that enables automatic actions and reactions. **Answer:** A