

Comparative Pain Scale

	0	No pain. Feeling perfectly normal. Lucky you!
Minor Does not interfere with most activities. Able to adapt to pain psychologically and with medication or devices such as cushions.	1 Very Mild	Very light, barely noticeable pain—like a mosquito bite or poison ivy itch. Most of the time, you never think about the pain.
	2 Discomforting	Minor pain, like lightly pinching the fold of skin between the thumb and first finger with the other hand, using the fingernails. Note that people may react differently to this self-test.
	3 Tolerable	Very noticeable pain, like an accidental cut, a blow to the nose causing a bloody nose, or a doctor giving you an injection. The pain is not so strong that you can't get used to it. Most of the time, you eventually stop noticing the pain. You have <i>adapted</i> to it.
Moderate Interferes with many activities. Requires lifestyle changes, but patient remains independent. Unable to adapt to pain.	4 Distressing	Strong, deep pain, like an average toothache, the initial pain from a bee sting, or minor trauma to part of the body, such as stubbing your toe. So strong that you notice the pain all of the time and <i>cannot completely adapt</i> . This pain level can be simulated by pinching the fold of skin between the thumb and first finger with the other hand, using the fingernails, and squeezing really hard for an extended period of time. Note how the simulated pain is initially piercing but becomes dull after that. Chronic pain patients may have previously reported this type of pain as a level 6 before making lifestyle changes to cope.
	5 Very Distressing	Strong, deep, piercing pain, such as a sprained ankle when you stand on it wrong, or mild back pain. Not only do you notice the pain all the time, but you are now so preoccupied with managing it that your normal lifestyle is curtailed. Temporary personality disorders are frequent.
	6 Intense	Strong, deep, piercing pain so strong that it seems to partially dominate your senses, causing you to think somewhat unclearly. At this point, you begin to have trouble holding a job or maintaining normal social relationships. Comparable to a bad non-migraine headache combined with several bee stings, or bad back pain.
Severe Unable to engage in normal activities. Patient is disabled and unable to function independently.	7 Very Intense	Same as level 6, except that the pain completely dominates your senses, causing you to think unclearly about half the time. At this point, you are effectively disabled and frequently cannot live alone. Comparable to an average migraine. Chronic pain patients take any “as needed” painkillers they have been prescribed. If those don't work, it can escalate to 8 or 9.
	8 Utterly Horrible	Pain so intense that you can no longer think clearly at all, and have often undergone severe personality change if the pain has been present for a long time. Suicide is frequently contemplated and sometimes attempted. Comparable to childbirth or a really bad migraine.
	9 Excruciating Unbearable	Pain so intense that you can't tolerate it, and demand painkillers or surgery, no matter the risk or consequences. If this doesn't work, suicide is frequent, since there is no more joy possible in life. Comparable to throat cancer. If chronic pain patients report level 9, take it very seriously, as they tend to underreport their pain because of relativity.
	10 Unimaginable Unspeakable	Pain so intense that you will briefly go unconscious. Most people will never experience this level of pain. Those who have suffered a severe accident, such as a crushed hand, and lost consciousness as a result of the pain and not blood loss, have experienced level 10.