

How mind-body techniques helped me recover from RSI

Below read my interpretation/understanding of mind-body theories and experience of successfully using some techniques, in this overview of my personal journey to recovery

The mind and body work as a whole (there is no such thing as “all in the mind”!)

Emotions are manifested physically by our body: the emotional part of the brain also deals with our unconscious bodily functions like breathing.

Obvious ways that emotions affect our bodies:

- happy: smiling, laughing, urges to run, skip, jump, dance in celebration
- unhappy: frowning, crying, feeling tired, slumped posture

Less obvious ways that emotions can affect our bodies:

- stress=tense muscles, tense jaw, unrelaxed posture, chronic pain

Why does emotional stress sometimes cause physical pain / physical damage?

- unconsciously, it's a 'diversion' tactic your brain uses to help you avoid dealing with your emotions: it gives you something physical to focus on instead (for some people, that physical outlet could be addictions to drink, cigarettes, chocolate etc)
- it's an outlet for emotions that we often repress
 - road rage
 - computer rage
 - general irritants: rude people, politicians, whatever “gets your blood boiling”
- it's where emotions that we never dealt with in the past are still stored in the body

You can stop physical pain by controlling your unconscious reaction to emotions

When you feel physical pain, get emotional: the pain dissolves when your brain realises it's not working. Think about something that winds you up, and don't push the emotion away, allow yourself to feel it fully (and tell yourself that the brain's diversion tactic is not working). Try going for a short walk to stomp out frustration. When the brain gets the message, pain dissolves.

Read ‘The Mind-Body Prescription’ by Dr Sarno, and try the theory out.

If this method is too short term and the pain keeps coming back:

it is possible there are repressed emotions from the past stored in your body that you don't realise are there. I didn't think I had any repressed emotions inside me: I have not had any particular traumatic events happen to me and am pretty laid back. Prepare to surprise yourself...

Read ‘The Journey’ by Brandon Bays, then try the guided Journey on CD like I did (or find a Journey therapist who can help you release past emotions from your body).

Chronology of my symptoms

- 2001 onwards: aches and pains in the upper back (didn't realise they were RSI-related)
- 2003: hand, wrist, arm, neck and shoulder pain
- 2003-2005: all the above plus weakness in wrist: sometimes I could not pick up an empty mug
- 2005: took 5 weeks off work due with stress/depression: having RSI is really stressful in itself
- 2005-2006: continuing pain on and off, plus instant muscle and nerve reactions to the slightest annoyance: felt a bit like static electricity going through my muscles and nerves
- Feb 2006 - Feb 2007: working full time on a PC pain free, and strength has returned to normal: I still get niggles of irritation in muscles in upper back occasionally, but use this as a reminder to stretch, relax and de-stress