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Hope for pain sufferers

Lynn Cooper has always led an active lifestyle that included sports and outdoor activities. She even dreamed of doing a marathon one day. A workplace accident that occurred 24 years ago left Cooper with chronic back pain that she is still finding ways to cope with. Everyday tasks like grocery shopping and vacuuming require extra planning and even help from friends and family.



"While the chronic pain is a daily challenge, I am not ruled by the pain," says Cooper. "I plan and prioritize my life and activities and pace myself through each day, especially the tough pain days."

Cooper's pain can be persistent and debilitating, but she's learned to manage it over the years. The first task was accepting that pain would be a constant challenge in her life. Seeking resources and being proactive in her treatment options has helped Cooper identify the methods that are most effective for her, including swimming, stretching, maintaining a well-balanced diet and accepting that sometimes a day off is necessary.

While Cooper has learned to deal with her pain, more than half of Canadians affected by pain do not consult with a healthcare provider, and when they do, they often do not find the relief they require. Instead, many self-

medicate, with more than 80 per cent of pain sufferers using over-the-counter medication and an alarming 18 per cent using alcohol, illegal narcotics or non-prescribed medications to treat their pain.

Cooper's life has changed drastically since the accident, and while she may not be able to run a marathon, she still leads an active lifestyle. Cooper advises other pain sufferers not to take the issue of pain lightly, to learn about their pain condition and to seek the necessary help.

Canadians looking for more information on pain can visit www.pain-explained.ca, an advocacy initiative seeking to achieve better understanding, prevention and management of all types of pain in Canada or www.canadianpaincoalition.ca for pain resources.

—www.newscanada.com

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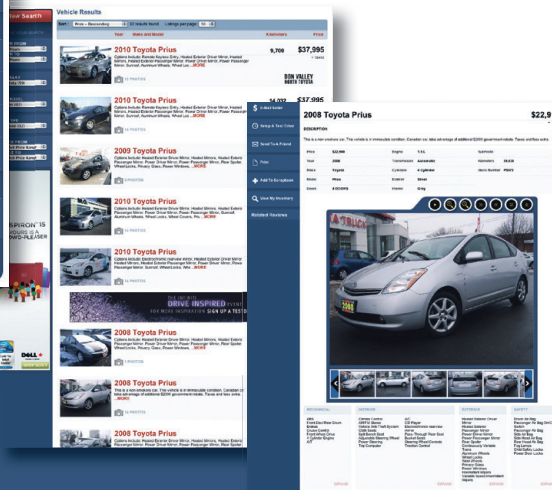
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