

Neuroplastic Pain Self-Assessment Checklist

Use this checklist to identify patterns suggesting your symptoms may be driven by a sensitized nervous system rather than structural damage.

1. Inconsistency (Location)

Question: How do your symptoms behave regarding their location in your body?

☐ **Key Neuroplastic Indicator:** The pain frequently migrates, moves up and down, or shifts to entirely new locations.

2. Inconsistency (Activity)

Question: How does your pain behave in relation to physical activity and resting?

☐ **Key Neuroplastic Indicator:** My symptoms are inconsistent; they might occur hours after an activity, at different times of the day, or change randomly without a clear physical trigger.

3. Spreading Patterns

Question: Over the course of your chronic pain, have you noticed your symptoms changing regarding their coverage?

☐ **Key Neuroplastic Indicator:** My symptoms have spread over time to affect different, wider parts of my body.

4. Symmetry & Widespread Pain

Question: Do your symptoms exhibit any patterns in how they appear on your left or right side?

☐ **Key Neuroplastic Indicator:** My symptoms occur across a large area, are widespread, or appear symmetrically (mirroring) on both sides of my body.

5. Stress & Emotional Triggers

Question: How do your stress levels or emotional state affect your symptoms?

☐ **Key Neuroplastic Indicator:** My pain comes on or significantly worsens when I am feeling stressed, anxious, overwhelmed, or emotionally upset.

6. The Distraction Effect

Question: What happens to your symptoms when you are engaged in a highly enjoyable or distracting activity (e.g., a hobby, socializing, vacation)?

☐ **Key Neuroplastic Indicator:** My pain significantly decreases or completely disappears when I am deeply engaged in enjoyable activities or heavily distracted.

7. Lack of Structural Findings

Question: What have medical professionals concluded regarding the structural cause of your pain?

☐ **Key Neuroplastic Indicator:** Diagnostic testing and imaging (MRIs, X-rays) show no definitive cause for my pain, or the findings are minor/normal variations that do not match the severity of my symptoms.

8. Onset & Evolution

Question: How did your pain initially begin, or how has it evolved over time?

☐ **Key Neuroplastic Indicator:** My pain originated without any clear physical trauma, or it persisted long after an original injury had fully healed.

9. Benign Triggers

Question: Do seemingly harmless or mild external stimuli trigger or worsen your pain?

☐ **Key Neuroplastic Indicator:** My symptoms are triggered or provoked by stimuli that do not cause physical damage, such as light touch, wind, cold, specific safe movements, or changes in weather.

10. Multiple System Symptoms

Question: Do you experience other persistent, seemingly unconnected symptoms alongside your primary pain?

☐ **Key Neuroplastic Indicator:** I experience multiple, different types of symptoms (such as pain, fatigue, headaches, digestive issues, or bladder urgency) either together or alternating at different times.

Educational Summary

Neuroplastic pain occurs when the brain creates genuine danger signals (pain) in response to learned neural circuits, even after physical tissues have healed. If you checked multiple indicators above—especially symptoms that shift, fade with distraction, flare with stress, or lack an explanatory structural cause—your pain system may simply be hypersensitive. Because these pathways are learned, they can be unlearned through targeted brain retraining strategies like Pain Reprocessing Therapy (PRT).

This is for informational purposes only. For medical advice or diagnosis, consult a professional.