

The Pain Barrier

by Wiley Patterson

I think that at the pain barrier, to improve, one proceeds to slowly process the neurological data associated with the unconsciously learned reactions to the pain. If ever too much data (pain) is presented at once, then the unconscious reactive pattern is triggered and once again reinforced. Many clients then conclude that this stuff isn't working.

I often ask the client to go to the pain barrier and then make micro movements, a la Continuum. I had not considered isometrics.

What is clear to me, however, is my theory that much of this chronic pain stuff operates like a caged dog dimly considering dinner and that damned bell.

I spend a lot of time teaching progressive levels of relaxation as the client begins to float his edge closer to normal. To the degree he can stay relaxed, he can keep the neural sensation from crossing the threshold provoking the disorganizing spasms.

If the client intellectualizes this concept, then has a successful experience with controlling pain while increasing joint range, he usually gets really busy doing this at home, happily extinguishing the conditioned response by using non-reinforcement. Then I can get to the structural organizing with much less discomfort for him.