

TENS Stimulation Therapy

DISCLAIMER

This is for information purposes only. If you have specific questions regarding pain please ask your doctor.

Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) therapy is a non-invasive treatment that is easy to apply with relatively few contraindications.

TENS is drug-free, easy to use, and safe method of managing pain. A very low level electrical current is applied to target areas of the body using electrodes. The electrodes are attached directly to your skin. When the machine is switched on, small electrical impulses are delivered to the electrodes that is delivered to chosen area of the body, which can be felt as a tingling sensation.

The electrical impulses simulate the muscles to relax, this relieves aching by reducing the pain signals going to the spinal cord and brain. The impulses may also stimulate the production of endorphins which are the body's natural painkillers.

There are millions of nerve cells in the body, each one can transfer signals through to the spinal cord and onto the brain. Some nerve cells carry pain signals others carry messages about touch and pressure.

Contraindications

TENS machines can be bought from most chemists, TENS machine should not be used if the client:

- has a pacemaker or implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD)
- suffers epilepsy or a heart problem
- if there poor sensation in the area where the electrodes are to be applied
- don't place electrodes over dermatological lesions e.g. dermatitis, eczema
- if the source of pain is where internal metalwork, such as screws, wires, implants or metal plates have been inserted.
- if pregnant or there's the possibility of pregnancy - TENS therapy may not be recommended early in pregnancy

The use of TENS therapy

TENS therapy may be able to help reduce pain and muscle spasms caused by a wide range of conditions including:

- sports injuries
- knee joint pain
- neck pain
- back pain

- arthritis
- endometriosis pelvic pain
- period pain

It's also sometimes used as a method of pain relief during labour.

Positioning of the Electrodes

Make sure the machine is switched off before applying the electrodes to the skin. Position the pads either side of the painful area, at least 25mm apart.

Never place the pads over:

- the front or sides of the neck
- the temples
- the mouth or eyes
- the chest and upper back at the same time
- irritated, infected or broken skin
- varicose veins
- numb areas

Positioning of the electrode

Normally, the electrode pads will position at the site of the pain, sometimes they will be place over the nerve pathway supplying the painful area.

Positioning the electrode pads on a nerve pathway:

The TENS electrode pads are placed on the back over the main nerve supply areas of the body (dermatomes). In this way pain messages from specific areas of the body will be blocked.

To get the most benefit from TENS therapy, it's important that the settings are adjusted correctly for you and your individual condition.