MS INFO CHANNEL

Guide · Diary · Evidence

Pain, Spasticity and Sleep with MS

Understand it, find your triggers, know the help without medication: with diary pages and doctor-visit prompts

PDF BOOK · A4

80 PAGES

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Foreword: How to use this book

Pain, stiff muscles and bad nights belong together. This book helps you understand them and talk about them.

If you live with MS, you may know this: your body hurts, your muscles feel tight, and the nights bring no rest. The next day you have less energy. None of this means you are weak. These are common problems, and they can often be sorted out and eased better than you might expect.

This book explains **what** may lie behind pain, spasticity and sleep problems. It shows you **what you can try yourself** without medication. And it gives you **tools**: diary pages, checklists and questions for your next appointment.

What this book is, and what it is not

- It is an **orientation**. You get sourced information in plain language.
- It is **not treatment** and does not replace advice from your care team.
- It names **no medication amounts**. Which medicines suit you is decided with your neurologist, pain specialist and family doctor.
- It makes **no promises of a cure**. For many kinds of help the evidence is thin. We say so openly.

How to read it

1. Start with what bothers you most right now: pain, spasticity or sleep.
2. Take one chapter or one section at a time. Breaks are fine.
3. Start the diary in chapter 9 early. It is the heart of the book.
4. Use chapter 10 to prepare your next appointment.

INFO Where the numbers come from

Every number has a source in square brackets, for example [4]. The numbers lead to the source list at the end. They describe groups of people. They do not tell you how it is for you personally.

INFO Status and validity

The information is current as of 4 November 2026. Several sources are German guidelines. The German MS guideline is a living guideline and is updated every year [1]. For important decisions, always ask for the current version.

ATTENTION In an emergency

If you suddenly have severe chest pain, trouble breathing or severe new symptoms, call your local emergency number straight away (112 in Germany). More in chapter 12.

1 Understanding pain in MS

Pain is common in MS and has different causes. If you know the type, you can describe it better.

How common is pain?

Pain is one of the common MS symptoms. A large analysis of many studies found that about **63 percent** of people with MS had pain, with wide variation between studies [4]. The German MS guideline gives values of up to 80 percent for pain and sensory disturbances together. It stresses that numbers differ because studies measure pain in different ways [1].

REMEMBER

You are not alone with pain. It is common in MS, and the guideline sees a need to catch up in how it is treated [1].

Already at diagnosis, about 20 percent of people have some kind of pain. Pain becomes more likely with longer disease duration, higher disability and progressive courses [1].

CHECKLIST Five questions to describe your pain

- [ ] Where is it, and does it spread?
- [ ] What does it feel like: burning, shooting, dull, pulling?
- [ ] When does it occur: constantly, in attacks, only with effort?
- [ ] What makes it worse, what eases it?
- [ ] How strong is it on a scale from 0 to 10?

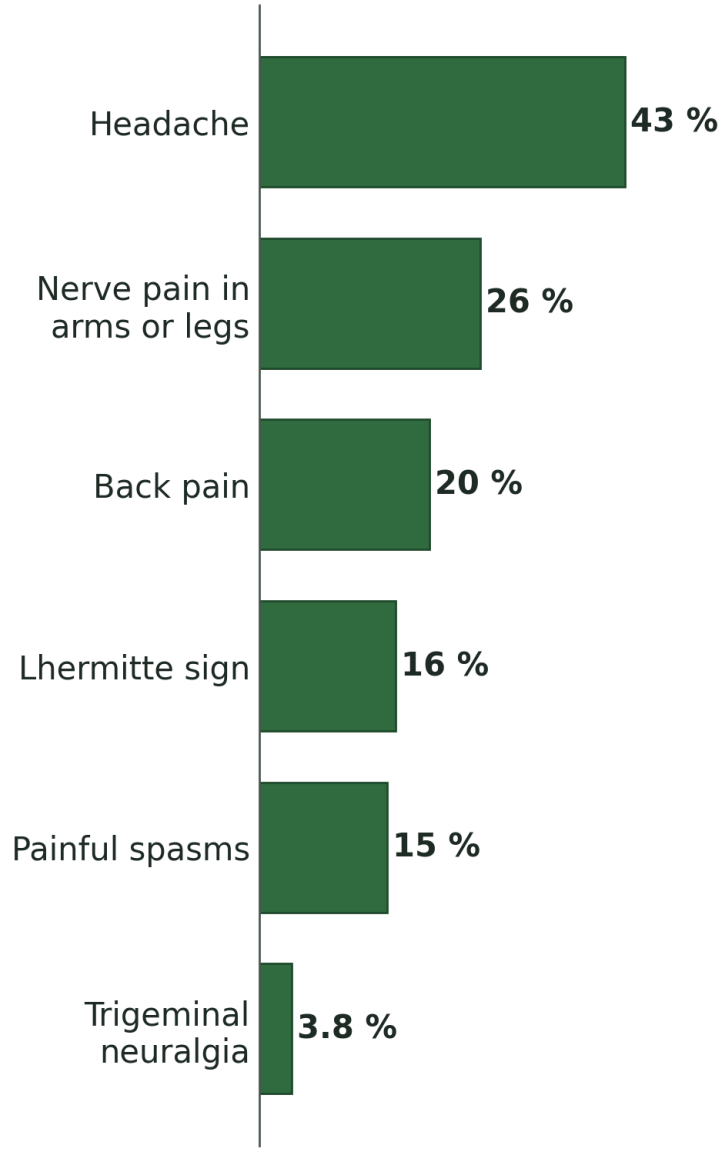


Figure 1: Which types of pain occur in MS? Share in studies
Source: [4] Foley et al., Pain 2013.

INFO How to read the chart

The numbers apply to the groups studied. They do not show your own risk. Several types of pain can occur at the same time.

Two basic kinds: nerve pain and tissue pain

The guideline separates two causes. **Neuropathic pain** arises in the nervous system itself. **Nociceptive pain** arises in tissue, for example in muscles and joints [1]. The UK charity MS Trust describes the same two kinds [21].