Graded Motor Imagery – Phase 2: Motor Imagery

What is Graded Motor Imagery?
When a person has pain for a long time, changes occur in the brain and nervous system as the body tries to protect itself from the pain. Graded Motor Imagery (GMI) is a treatment used to train your brain to reduce pain signals and improve function.

- There are 3 phases of GMI:
  - Right/left identification
  - Motor imagery
  - Mirror therapy
- Each phase lasts about 2 weeks.

What Types of Pain can be Helped with GMI?
Research has shown GMI can be helpful for:
- Phantom limb pain
- Chronic regional pain syndrome
- Pain following a stroke

Phase 2 – Motor Imagery
Motor imagery is thinking about or rehearsing a common activity. This rehearsal makes the brain cells think that it completing the activity, without causing pain.

- Get in a comfortable position with eyes open or closed.
- Imagine doing a useful or meaningful activity (getting out of bed, walking to the bathroom, washing hair, applying lotion), or activities you see other people doing around you or on TV.
- Use all of your senses during this task (feel, smell, hear, and see).
- A beginning activity is to look at a picture of a hand or foot and imagine yourself moving your hand or foot into the position in the picture and then back to where it started.
- This should be completed every day for a total of one hour

Stop and discuss with your therapist if your pain increases.