

8. What Type of TENS Units Should You Get for Controlling Your Pain? Electrical Stimulation Units?

As stated in an earlier video we (Bob and Brad) have tried dozens of TENS units. Most units work fine but many are very confusing and have very poor instructions. In the end we decided that we were going to choose one company to provide TENS units to our patients. The company is iReliev.

The following is a list of things to consider when purchasing a TENS unit:

1. The first decision to make is do you want just TENS, or do you want a machine that has both TENS and EMS? You may recall there is one simple difference between TENS (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation) and EMS (Electrical Muscle Stimulation). When using a TENS unit, you are trying to reduce your pain. When using an EMS unit, you are trying to strengthen a muscle. If your muscle is no longer working at all, you may also use an EMS unit to try and retrain the muscle to start working. You cannot substitute one for the other. Many units contain both but if you do not need EMS you can just get TENS.
2. Does the unit have a rechargeable battery? We remember very clearly several years ago when none of the units had rechargeable batteries. It was a pain to have to replace the batteries. However, if you are not certain whether TENS will be helpful to you, you might try a non-chargeable unit because they are less expensive.
3. Do you want a unit with wires or without (wireless)? The wireless units are more expensive. Also, the wireless units have separate pods that need to be charged and used with the adhesive pads. But, of course, when you own a wireless model you do not have to deal with wires.
4. Some units are very simple with just a few buttons, others have many added features (such as being able to control the TENS from your smart phone, or even pulsating to the beat of the music on your phone).
5. Electrodes (pads) come in many sizes and shapes. Large sizes work better for larger areas, like the low back. Smaller sizes can direct the current easier to smaller areas like the knee or elbow. The pads generally attach

through one of two means: pigtail type with a prong connection, or button-type snaps. Be sure to get pads that are compatible with your TENS unit.

6. Price. As a comparison iReliev has the 1313 Tens unit model that has wires and uses (3) AAA Batteries for about \$49 (if you use our link). On the higher end they have the Premium TENS + EMS Therapeutic Wearable System. This unit is wireless and rechargeable and runs about \$189 if you use our link. These prices may have changed since this publication.
7. One of our favorite units is the iReliev 8080 TENS unit. It costs about \$129 if you use our link. It is a TENS and EMS unit combined and it has wires, but it is rechargeable.