

# Virtual reality effectively reduces pain twice compared to morphine

Studies show that the use of virtual reality technology (VR) is very effective in reducing pain for patients.

More than 100 million Americans are suffering from chronic forms of pain. Since the 90s, prescription drugs using Opioid analgesics have tripled in the United States, a country with 5% of the population using 80% of the country's Opioid.

Former soldier Howard Rose now works in VR industry thinking that we can find an alternative. Rose began working with VR more than 20 years ago at Washington University's Human Interface Technology Lab (HITLab). This laboratory was founded by veteran Tom Furness of the US Air Force. He began using the most primitive forms of VR in the military since the 60s, from the treatment of phobia to foreign language teaching.

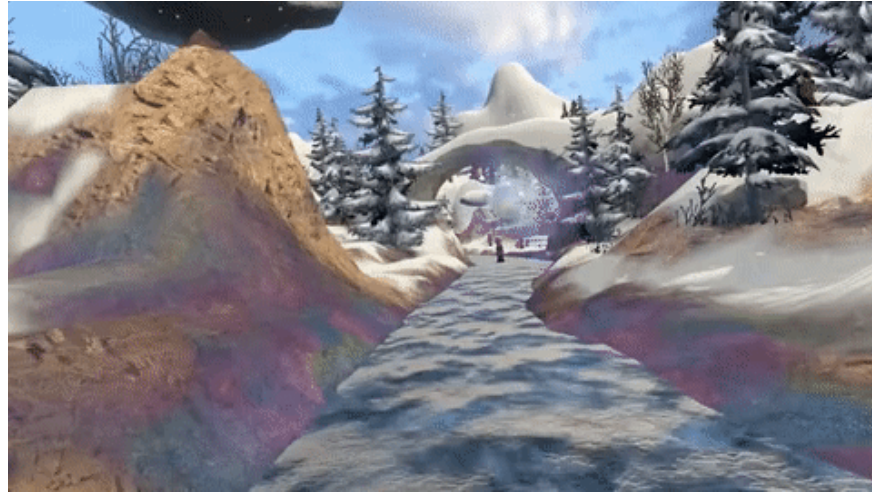
It was at HITLab that Hunter Hoffman , a psychologist, created **SnowWorld**, an experimental **therapy for patients with burns by bringing them into a virtual reality environment** . These patients have to undergo very painful treatments, even if they use painkillers, the treatments are terrible for them.



SnowWorld tries to draw their attention to a magical world in which they find themselves flying on a virtual cannon and throwing snowballs at penguins and snowmen.

Over the past 10 years, Hoffman and his colleagues have tried many times, with both veterans, and technology proves it effective. Gaming patients in the course of treatment say that **their pain is reduced by half** , compared to other forms of attention such as music or games that do not use virtual reality.

That evidence encouraged Rose to leave HITLab to establish Firsthand Technology, a startup VR that aims to build SnowWorld and create new technologies that can help relieve pain. Along with a clinic in Tennessee (led by Dr. Red Jones), Rose began testing a new product called **Cool !**, a SnowWorld 2.0 version that uses VR technology to treat Jones patients.



The first batch of tests showed very promising results. In a small clinic with about 40 people, each person undergoes 60 sessions of VR treatment, all of which indicate that the level of pain has decreased, except for one person. **The patient said that the pain decreased by 60 to 75% compared to before using VR** . Immediately after the session, many patients also said that they had 30 to 50% pain relief, compared to using morphine, the average number was only about 30%.

Still very early but according to Quartz, many researchers have had similar successes. Pain Studies Lab at Simon Fraser University in Canada, Virtual Reality Medical Center in San Diego and many other places have reported significant improvements in patients using VR for pain relief.

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