Musculoskeletal pain is a significant public health problem with associated high prevalence and cost. Rehabilitation interventions are effective for some patients; however, the mechanisms through which these interventions work are largely unknown. Why interventions work is more than an academic discussion as clinical practice currently operates in a trial and error approach without strong guidance for who is likely to benefit from a rehabilitation intervention approach. This spotlight will present a line of research considering why rehabilitation interventions for musculoskeletal pain may work within the framework of a theoretical model. Translation of the findings to clinical practice will be considered.