

# What is Fibromyalgia?

## Symptoms of fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia is a chronic pain syndrome whereby the individual experiences pain throughout the body for at least three months. Your healthcare practitioner will often test tender points on the body and there is pain in at least 11 of the 18 designated sites. The tender point exam is done by applying approximately four kg of pressure to specific points on the body. Individuals with fibromyalgia usually ache all over, sleep poorly, experience stiffness upon awakening, and many times are tired throughout the day. It is not unusual for these individuals to be prone to headaches which start in the neck, and experience memory and concentration problems, dizziness, numbness, and tingling. Chest pain associated with fibromyalgia will be in the muscles of the chest wall and cartilage of the ribs. It will typically be a dull ache and some individuals experience spasms and sharp pain. Problems with concentration and memory are often referred to as "fibro fog" and these symptoms are sporadic, thus contributing to confusion and loss of confidence.

My experience is that individuals suffering from fibromyalgia are more sensitive to cold and dampness, allergens, activity levels and stress. The primary issue is pain that does not go away. It is often described as aching, throbbing, gnawing and unrelenting. I have so seen tendonitis in the shoulders, elbows, and hips associated with fibromyalgia. Weight gain is typically an issue due to decreased physical activity as a result of pain and fatigue. It is not uncommon for individuals to experience depression and/or

anxiety, many times associated with the debilitation of chronic pain.

Fibromyalgia often runs in families, suggesting a genetic predisposition. It may be triggered by an infection, injury, surgery, significant stress, or sleep disturbance. It is essential that other conditions such as hypothyroidism, rheumatic, and autoimmune conditions be ruled out. Individuals with fibromyalgia are often afflicted with rheumatic autoimmune diseases, irritable bowel syndrome, and interstitial cystitis. Women are more prone to fibromyalgia than men by a ratio of 9 to 1.



*All's Well*  
Health for Body, Mind, Spirit

by Moira Fitzpatrick, PhD, ND

## What can I do to facilitate my own healing?

The treatment of fibromyalgia requires a mind/body/spirit approach. The first step is to decrease pain, restore sleep and improve the quality of life. Non-medical approaches that I have found to be useful in decreasing pain include hypnotherapy, Emotional Transformation Therapy (ETT), and cranial electrotherapy stimulation. Naturopathic medicine approaches include nutritional support, magnesium, d-ribose, exercise within tolerance, and other botanical/homeopathic support.

Hypnotherapy is a state of deep relaxation, where the individual has access to the subconscious mind or the mind-body state. The depth of the state occurs through absorption into a single focus. Protocols to reduce pain give the individual an experience of diminishing or eliminating their pain. I often create a CD of the new experience that can be listened to daily. It is essential to utilize the first three hypnotherapy sessions to address pain control and sleep.

Emotional Transformation Therapy is a form of energy medicine using light and color to change states of distress, pain, emotions and thoughts to a healthier more desired experience. Light enters the eyes and photoreceptors convert what is seen into neural impulses, which affect both the brain

and nervous system. When the therapist controls the color and frequency of light, the neural impulses can be guided to the part of the brain responsible for pain or other symptoms. My experience has been that pain can be eliminated completely within a single session. Emotional Transformation Therapy was founded by Steven Vazquez, PhD, who

through the pentose phosphate pathway. This reaction is important for energy synthesis.

In 1973, Heinz-Gerd Zimmer at the University of Munich discovered that individuals suffering from cardiac ischemia (oxygen deprivation) could recover quicker with d-ribose. Five years later he reported the same effect in skeletal muscle. More recently, Jacob Teitelbaum, MD et al. demonstrated in a pilot study that d-ribose at a dose of 5 grams three times a day improve energy, sleep, mental clarity, pain intensity, and wellbeing in patients suffering from fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome. I have also found that vitamin D, resveratrol and many adaptogens are helpful for people suffering from fibromyalgia. Adaptogens include such herbs as rhodiola, ginseng, licorice, holy basil, ashwaganda.

## How do I put it all together if I am suffering from fibromyalgia?

The first step is to find a healthcare practitioner who listens, is comprehensive and thorough, and with whom you connect. Healing from fibromyalgia is a process of connecting to your own inner healer and using the tools that resonate with you. Decreasing pain and improving sleep is essential and then creating a balanced lifestyle with rest, exercise, good nutrition, and meaningful experiences.

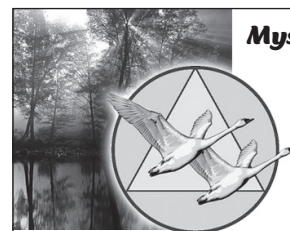
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practices in Dallas, Texas and teaches throughout the world.

Cranial Electrotherapy Stimulation (CES) is the application of small amounts of current, less than 1,000 microamperes, to the head via ear clip electrodes. It is thought to modulate the chemical and electrical activity in nerve cells of the brainstem, possibly affects neurotransmitters and induces an alpha state. Research using CES has shown significant improvement in pain reduction, sleep, and increased energy and well being.

Research points to certain nutritional supplements, which may be beneficial for individuals who suffer from fibromyalgia. Some studies demonstrate a magnesium deficiency in individuals with fibromyalgia. Magnesium deficiency can cause cramping, numbness, tingling, and fatigue. D-ribose is a sugar that is a building block of ATP or cellular energy. In the body, ribose is formed



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