

# Electrotherapy Muscle Stimulation – We use our ERE (Advanced Electro reflex Energizer)

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By getting a prescription most insurance companies will cover this: Have a doctor write a prescription for reflexology by way of Electrotherapy Muscle Stimulation on ERE, or massage through Electrotherapy Muscle Stimulation on a ERE, and/or cleaning blood of parasites with electrowave Electrotherapy Muscle Stimulation pulses with ERE.

Many fibromyalgia sufferers become frustrated at the lack of effective treatment available for their fibromyalgia symptoms. The [chronic headaches](#), muscle weakness and fatigue can often be too much to bear. However, if you are looking to try a new treatment that can help relieve some of these symptoms, then you may want to try electrotherapy muscle stimulation. Electrotherapy muscle stimulation is a safe and effective treatment for the chronic pain and fatigue associated with fibromyalgia.

## **What is Electrotherapy?**

Electrotherapy, or electromedicine, is a class of treatment that uses electrical impulses to improve symptoms of pain, muscle loss, and depression in patients. It may sound quite scary to you to be treated using an electrical current, but, in fact, electricity has been used in medicine for almost 2,000 years.

Electricity is actually one of the safest and most effective ways of treating pain and other illness, because it is associated with so few side effects. Electrotherapy delivers a small, pulsating current to a person's muscles and nerve endings. This current causes the muscles to contract and then relax. Repeated stimulations allow the muscles to strengthen, relax, and feel less painful.

## **What are the Benefits of Electrotherapy?**

There are different types of electrotherapy but they are all associated with the same benefits. Electrotherapy was introduced to American medicine in the 1950s, and used to treat anxiety, depression, and insomnia. Now, electrotherapy has proven effective in treating other illnesses, including chronic fatigue, multiple sclerosis, and fibromyalgia. Electrotherapy promotes nerve conduction, blood circulation, and also helps the body to heal on its own. It is very similar to a [deep tissue massage](#). The effects of electrotherapy are cumulative, so you will see more benefits after repeated treatments.

## **Types of Electrotherapy**

There are three main types of electrotherapy muscle stimulation available to fibromyalgia sufferers. Before you begin electrotherapy treatment, speak with a licensed professional and find out whether you are suited for the treatment.

### **Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS)**

TENS therapy is a non-invasive and non-addictive way to treat fibromyalgia pain and fatigue. It delivers a current of about 60 milliamperes to muscles and nerve endings that are causing you particular pain. It causes these nerves to contract and relax, allowing for muscle stimulation and strengthening. It also reduces pain and restores mood.

TENS electrotherapy equipment can be purchased and used at home, for private, comfortable treatment. The TENS unit comes with a battery, electrodes, and an electric signal generator. You simply place the TENS electrodes, which are usually rubber or felt pads, over a painful area of your body. An electric current is then delivered to the electrode, stimulating your muscle and blocking pain messages from being sent to your brain. This allows your pain symptoms to improve. TENS units can be used once a week, every other day, or as often as needed to provide relief. They cost between \$400 and \$700.

### **Percutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (PENS)**

PENS is a variant of TENS, only it uses a needle probe to stimulate nerve endings instead of a felt pad. PENS treatments must be done by a licensed professional, either an acupuncturist or general physician, and typically last 30 minutes. The physician first locates sore or painful areas that require treatment. The physician inserts needles that have been attached to electrical impulses 1 to 4 centimeters below the skin. Electrical impulses are then delivered to the needles.

PENS treatments are thought to be more effective than TENS treatments. This is because the needle electrodes are able to bypass your skin, providing less resistance to the electric current. It allows for nerves to be stimulated more accurately and efficiently. PENS treatments will probably only be available to you if TENS treatments have provided you no relief. The procedure is not at all painful, and is associated with few, if any, side effects.

### **Cranial Electrotherapy Stimulation (CES)**

In the past, CES was used exclusively to improve mood and sleeping habits in ill patients. Recently, it has been introduced as a chronic pain treatment for people with illness like fibromyalgia. Cranial electrotherapy can be performed in the privacy of your own home. This treatment



## Treat Associated Conditions

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There are many conditions associated with fibromyalgia syndrome. These conditions can leave you feeling sore, **fatigued**, and **depressed**. Treating these conditions is a good way to begin to fight fibromyalgia.

### **Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)**

The abdominal pain, distension, constipation and diarrhea associated with irritable bowel syndrome can be quite distressing. Irritable bowel syndrome symptoms are often persistent and can be debilitating. However, consultation with your doctor and changes that you can make will lead to an improvement in your symptoms. Check out these tips to help you fight IBS:

- Eliminate the foods that you find aggravate your fibromyalgia symptoms.
- Minimize the psychological stress in your day to day life by developing coping strategies.
- Adhere to the basic rules for maintaining regular bowel habits, such as including lots of fibre, fruits and vegetables in your diet, as well as 6-8 glasses of water per day.
- Some medications may help with your constipation and/or diarrhea.

### **Dry Eyes**

If you are one of the many fibromyalgia patients that suffer from dry eyes, simple over-the-counter drops can provide you with some relief by holding water in your eye. Discuss this fibromyalgia treatment with your health care provider, to help you decide on the most appropriate choice. You might also want to ask your doctor to check you out for signs of Sjogren's syndrome. This syndrome may be contributing to your persistent dry eyes.

### **Irritable Bladder Syndrome**

If you suffer from urinary or pelvic problems, you may have irritable bladder syndrome. Sensations of pain in the pubic area accompanied by an increased urgency to urinate are common symptoms of this condition. To deal with this try the following:

- Drink as much water as possible.
- Avoid bladder irritants such as fruit juices (especially cranberry juice).
- Ask your health care provider about pelvic floor exercises, such as Kegel exercises.

### **Fibrofog**

Fibrofog is a common problem for many fibromyalgia patients. Fibrofog affects memory and concentration, and can sometimes lead to short term memory loss. Usually, this is due to the distractive effects of chronic pain and mental fatigue. This means that combatting fibrofog also involves managing your other symptoms. Activities that help you to develop your memory and other cognitive functions may also help to reduce your fibrofog symptoms.

### **Cold Intolerance**

Up to one-third of all fibromyalgia sufferers may experience cold intolerance. This causes the hands and feet to become cold, and even discolor, upon exposure. This is often caused by a concurrent illness called Raynaud's Phenomenon. Treatment involves:

- Keeping warm! This includes dressing warmer and turning up the heat in your home.
- Exercising. Aerobic exercise has been shown to improve cold intolerance by improving peripheral circulation.
- Visiting your doctor if the cold intolerance persists.

### **Dizziness**

Fibromyalgia sufferers often complain about symptoms of dizziness and vertigo. If other more serious causes of dizziness are ruled out by your doctor (such as cranial nerve problems, demyelinating disorders, inner ear problems, medicine side effects and cancer) it may be due to muscular deconditioning or trigger points. Exercise, including strengthening and stretching, and massage should all help you maintain your balance levels, eliminating the dizziness.

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# Dealing with Your Fibromyalgia in the Workplace

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For many people, the decision to work isn't a decision at all. It is necessary for most of us to hold down a job to pay the bills. In addition, many people see work as a vital part of their lives, helping them to be social and to feel like they are contributing to something greater than themselves. Work can be very difficult for a person with fibromyalgia, but there are ways to learn to cope. It is estimated today that four to six million people with fibromyalgia are in the workforce and are learning to cope with their condition as they work.

## Monitor Your Work Pattern

In order to create a working pattern for yourself at your job, it's important to understand what makes you most comfortable, what sets off your flare-ups and what makes working difficult. Take one week and jot down what you are doing at your job and how you are feeling every fifteen minutes or so. This will be quite tedious for the week, but it will help to create a pattern that can be evaluated and observed. Then, with these notes, you'll be able to see, hopefully, what leads to some of your discomfort at work, what seems to help the most, what gives you the most stress, etc.

## Get Organized in Your Space

Many jobs require repetitive motions. Analyze your workspace to see if there are changes you could make to help with your physical discomfort or pain. For instance, if you spend a lot of time on the phone, try to get a headset. If you stand a great deal at work, make sure to purchase high-quality shoes and add a cushioned floor pad to the area where you stand the most. If you sit most of the day, invest in a high-quality, ergonomic chair. If your company can bring in a consultant to help your workspace to become more ergonomic, or if you can afford the consultation yourself, take advantage of this opportunity.

## Talk to Your Boss and Co-Workers

If your office mates don't know that you have fibromyalgia, you may want to let them know about it. This certainly depends on the level of your symptoms, but it may be helpful for them to know. You are not looking for pity, certainly, but you are looking for them to understand your needs. During your work day, you may need to take advantage of your high energy and low energy points. This means that you might be more productive at certain times and less productive at others. Stress can also make your fibromyalgia flare, so you'll want people to know that you need ample time to finish assignments. Your work time will be more productive and your co-workers will be more sensitive to you if they know what is going on. You can certainly stress with them that you aren't looking for special treatment, but that you are looking for them to be sensitive and to understand if your work load needs to ebb and slow a bit.

## Be Prepared

Don't get caught off-guard at work with a sudden flare-up in fibromyalgia symptoms. Consider what you will do if you suddenly have a problem with your symptoms. Consider pain-management techniques such as deep breathing and aromatherapy. Have your medication handy, if you take medication, and have a short speech prepared that you can use with co-workers on a bad day.

## Know Your Rights

It's very important to know your rights where you live. Under the American with Disability Act and the Family Medical Leave Act you may be qualified for workplace accommodations and protection against discrimination. Make sure that you know your rights so that you can be protected.

## Consider Alternatives

If your present job is simply not going to be able to accommodate your fibromyalgia, or you feel that this isn't the right work environment for you, start to consider transitioning to something else. Perhaps you will be better off working from home with your fibromyalgia. Perhaps there is another type of work that would better accommodate your good days and bad days. Brainstorm with a friend or partner about what your ideal job would look like and start to consider how you could find such a position. Working is certainly important - but so is your health; your goal is to find a position that will take both of these aspects of your life into consideration.

## At-Home Treatments

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Because fibromyalgia is a chronic illness that causes many symptoms, it is important to have a multi-faceted treatment approach. [Fibromyalgia treatment](#) can take place in your health care provider's office, at the chiropractor's, or even at the dentist. However, the best fibromyalgia treatment starts at home. At-home treatment for [fibromyalgia syndrome](#) can help you to reduce your daily pain and fatigue and regain that much-needed energy.

**Why Treat At Home?**  
You may be wondering why you need to treat your fibromyalgia symptoms at home, especially if you are having regular visits with your health care provider. Well, at-home treatment is actually the most vital and important part of a fibromyalgia treatment program. Because fibromyalgia is a chronic, long-term condition, it requires focused and meaningful treatment. Medical treatment provided by your doctor, or alternative therapies given to you by a naturopath are simply not enough to help you manage your fibromyalgia pain. Instead, steps must be taken every day to help reduce your symptoms and increase your energy. The easiest way to get this daily therapy is to engage in at-home treatments.

**What Can At-Home Treatments Do?**  
The benefits of at-home treatment for fibromyalgia are endless. Not only can you perform these therapies in the comfort of your own home, but these therapies are typically inexpensive or even free. At-home treatments help to:

- increase your energy
- alleviate fatigue
- decrease the effects of fibrofog
- boost your immune system

### Types of At Home Treatments

There are numerous types of fibromyalgia treatments, which you can pursue in the comfort of your own home.

#### Diet

Many fibromyalgia sufferers find that certain foods exacerbate their symptoms, while other foods work to relieve their symptoms. Though there is no hard evidence linking certain foods to symptom flares, many patients find fibromyalgia relief through a properly managed [diet](#). Learning to manage your diet can be difficult and time-consuming but the benefits that it can offer typically make it worthwhile.

**Foods to Avoid:** There are certain foods that every fibromyalgia patient should try to avoid completely or at least minimize in their diet. These foods tend to exacerbate symptoms and weaken your immune system so try to avoid:

- **Alcohol:** Alcohol triggers symptom flares in many fibromyalgia patients.
- **Caffeine:** Caffeine stresses the adrenal glands and liver, which are already stressed by the fibromyalgia illness
- **Sugar:** Sugar also stresses the adrenal glands, increasing the production of adrenalin. This can lead to stress and anxiety attacks.
- **Processed Foods:** Processed foods can increase widespread pain and swelling and may increase chemical sensitivity in some sufferers.

**Foods to Include:** Some foods help to decrease fibromyalgia symptoms and increase general health. These foods should be included in your daily diet.

- **Raw vegetables:** Raw vegetables contain antioxidants and phytochemicals that help to boost the immune system
- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids:** Found in fish, omega-3 helps to minimize nerve sensitivity and improve cognition
- **Water:** Water helps to purify the system and increase the circulation of oxygen and nutrients throughout the body

#### Vitamins

Daily vitamins are often recommended as part of a comprehensive at-home treatment program. Vitamins can help to ensure that you are getting all of the nutrients necessary to good health, as well as help to reduce fibromyalgia symptoms.

**B Complex Vitamins:** The B complex vitamins are very helpful in reducing fibromyalgia symptoms. The B vitamins, particularly Vitamin B-12, help to combat nerve problems, such as tingling and tenderness. The B vitamins also help to increase the number of red blood cells in

your body and protect the myelin sheath that protects your nerve endings. Take a B complex vitamin daily, or try to get foods fortified with B-12.

**Vitamin C:** Vitamin C is found in a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. It can help you to fight fibromyalgia symptoms by building up your immune system. It also works to reduce swelling. Take 250 mg to 500 mg of Vitamin C daily.

### Exercise

Exercise is one of the most important facets of a fibromyalgia treatment program. Though exercise can often be daunting in the face of fibromyalgia pain, it actually helps to decrease muscle stiffness and other symptoms. This is because exercise helps you to use your muscles, preventing muscle loss and weakness. It also works to increase your energy and stabilize your mood.

Here are some tips to help you get started.

- Try low-impact aerobic activities, like walking or swimming.
- Begin with just a few minutes of exercise a day.
- Work up to 30 minutes of exercise a day, three times a week.
- Don't push yourself too hard, or you could increase your fibromyalgia symptoms.
- Stretch before and after exercise.

**Keep a Daily Journal**  
Maintaining a journal of your daily activities can help you manage many of your fibromyalgia symptoms. If you're having troubles with fibrofog, writing down all your appointments and up-coming events will make it easier to remember those important dates.

A daily journal can also help you keep track of your symptoms as well as factors that may aggravate them. By making a record of these factors, you can create a clearer picture for yourself of just what triggers your fibromyalgia symptoms thereby helping you to avoid symptom flare-ups when possible.

**Bringing the Doctor Home**  
Some treatments, like biofeedback and electrotherapy, that are normally performed in a doctor's office can now be done in the comfort of your own home. Biofeedback machines, as well as electrotherapy devices, designed for home use offer fibromyalgia patients the option of using these therapies on their own. Although these devices are smaller and more limited in ability than those machines used by professionals, they can serve to ease your discomfort while cutting back on the number of doctors appointments you may need to treat your symptoms.

**Heat Therapy**  
Perhaps one of the easiest treatments to perform at home is heat therapy. By using heat packs, hot baths, or hot water bottles, you can help to soothe sore, aching muscles and ease stiff muscles. There are many inexpensive heating packs that you can buy at your local pharmacy which can be applied locally, where ever you feel the most discomfort.

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## Rhona's Story

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52 year old Rhona Shriner\* of Hartford, Connecticut has been suffering from fibromyalgia since she was 18. "I had terrible pain when I would raise my arm, but at the time there was no such thing as fibromyalgia, or at least, no one had heard of it. The doctor diagnosed my pain as busistis. He also gave me some wise advice, which I didn't follow; he told me to hold a stick and raise it above my head, a kind of stretching [exercise](#). He warned me that if I didn't stretch, I'd lose movement in that arm. I should have listened to him, and all these years later, I'm still trying to regain movement in that arm. Meantime, the pain was so bad that if I moved the wrong way in my sleep, it would wake me up in the middle of the night.

Like a lot of fibromyalgia patients, it was discovered I had hypoglycemia. This was ten years ago. It was suggested I try to find a massage therapist. I was very, very stiff at this time with a heavy feeling, and a lot of pain. I had 'brain fog' but when the hypoglycemia was diagnosed I started to keep a very serious diet. This was a year before I was diagnosed. I do not deviate from my diet. I have not touched white sugar, white flour or coffee in ten years. I eat organic, I don't eat at night. It is so related to the fibromyalgia. The difference was really dramatic.

### **Diet and Exercise Make All the Difference in the Fibromyalgia**

The exercise really makes a difference in my health. I exercise seriously. Exercise stabilizes sugar levels. These two things, the diet and the exercise make all the difference in the fibromyalgia. It's a fight. I run 6 days a week for 50 minutes and I stretch 20 minutes before I run. If you move one thing the wrong way you set off something else. In the morning, your body is so stiff, like a wooden puppet that doesn't work well. It took a long time to get to this point. A physical therapist helped.

### **Lose the Brain Fog with Exercise and Proper Diet**

I feel fibromyalgia mostly in my neck, back, and shoulders, but even my toes can get tight. I stretch my fingers when I run, it looks bad and embarrassed my children, but that's the way I lose the brain fog; exercise and eating right. And I roll right in to see the chiropractor when I get an attack."

\*Not her real name.

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## Eat Healthier For Fibromyalgia

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Eating healthy foods can really help you out when you are suffering from fibromyalgia. For fibromyalgia patients, the benefits of eating healthy are numerous, including symptom relief and stress management. Regular healthy eating can lead to increased energy and pain resistance, and it will also benefit all parts of your body.

### **The Effects of Poor Diet**

You must remember that if your diet is insufficient to support your health, then you will not feel as well as you could. Some patients have reported that certain types of foods, such as fatty, fried, or sugary types, seem to invite or worsen [fibromyalgia symptoms](#).

By avoiding things such as caffeine, alcohol and candy, you will help to improve your sleep and lessen the severity of some of your symptoms. Eating healthy and maintaining a balanced diet can go a long way to symptom control. Also, try discussing the possibility of taking vitamins with your health care provider. Smoking is also something that magnifies the symptoms of fibromyalgia patients. By quitting you will be taking the first steps to living pain free. It is also very important to drink lots of water to help flush out the toxins from your body.

### **Eat Your Protein!**

For the fibromyalgia sufferer, sufficient protein in the diet is very important. Protein is required for proper growth and maintenance of the body as it makes up to 20% of the mass of most of your cells and tissues.

Proteins also function as enzymes, hormones and antibodies, all of which are needed for your body to operate normally. Animal-derived proteins like milk, meat, fish, poultry and eggs contain good amounts of all essential amino acids, the building blocks of protein.

Some of the degenerative changes and tissue abnormalities seen in fibromyalgia may be exacerbated or even caused by insufficient levels of protein intake. Therefore a proper diet can help decrease the irritation, stiffness and pain associated with the tender points in fibromyalgia.

### **Avoid "Miracle" Diets**

Unfortunately, a number of unproven "miracle" diets and supplements are advertised as fibromyalgia treatments. These should be investigated carefully by patients before use. Not all of these supplements provide appropriate nutrition for healthy eating. When starting a new nutritional program, it is important to inform your physician as some supplements and foods cause serious, or even dangerous, side effects when mixed with certain medications.

### **Foods to Avoid**

Here is a list of the more important things that you should try to limit or eliminate completely from your diet:

- Refined sugar
- Alcohol
- Foods high in saturated fats
- High-calorie, high-fat, junk food
- Monosodium glutamate (MSG) and Nutrasweet (aspartame). Both glutamate (found in MSG) and aspartic acid (found in aspartame) stimulate pain augmenting receptors within the spinal cord
- Caffeine

Fibromyalgia patients should probably give up caffeine completely because even a small amount consumed in the morning can cause sleep disturbance. Be aware that many sodas and even some herbal teas contain caffeine, so it is a good idea to read the labels. If it doesn't boast that it is caffeine free, it is probably a good idea to assume that it isn't and avoid it. Try replacing your caffeine fix with healthier drinks like juice, milk, or water.

### **The Benefits of Healthy Eating**

A balanced diet is an essential part of a healthy eating plan. This can be very tough at first, but by limiting these things from your diet and adhering to the ratio of 40% carbohydrates, 30% protein and 30% fat for each meal, you will see great improvements in your symptoms of fatigue, pain, and stiffness, just to name a few. These results can be seen in as soon as one week!

In order to jump-kick your new healthy eating plan, why not consider [new decor for your kitchen?](#)



# Strength Training and Fibromyalgia (We use our Chi machine as part of this.)

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[Link to machine](#)

If you have fibromyalgia, the idea of any type of exercise may make you want shrivel up in despair. True, exercise can be painful, especially on those tender muscles and joints, but [exercise](#) is actually one of the most beneficial treatments for fibromyalgia symptoms. Exercise of any type has been proven to help lessen your pain, strengthen your muscles, and make your daily life a little bit easier. Strength training in particular has been receiving a lot of attention from fibromyalgia sufferers. If you are suffering from fibromyalgia pain, learn more about strength training and how it could help to reduce the intensity of your symptoms.

## **What is Strength Training?**

Strength training is a type of exercise that involves using your muscles to lift extra pounds. Over time, you lift increased amounts of weight in order to develop your strength and endurance. Strength training is typically done with free weights (like barbells and dumbbells) or on strength training equipment designed to target specific areas of the body. However, more and more strength trainers are using stretchy resistance bands to increase their muscle strength. Strength training without weights is also popular. Just use the resistance of your own body.

Strength training targets all the major areas of the body, including the arms, legs, abdominals, back, shoulders, and chest. There are specific strength training programs and exercises designed to work out particular muscles in these body parts, and they are usually done in sets, ranging from 8 to 12 repetitions for each set. In between sets, a rest is taken in order to allow the muscles to recuperate.

## **Strength Training vs Weight Training**

When we envision strength training, many of us picture men and women with rippling muscles lifting huge barbells. This is not the type of strength training that is advised for people with fibromyalgia. Instead, strength training for fibromyalgia sufferers is focused on developing increased strength, endurance, and muscle tone throughout the body – not those huge, bursting muscles. Fibromyalgia sufferers who wish to strength train should not be concerned with the amount of weight they can lift, but rather that they lift small amounts of weight regularly and correctly.

## **Benefits of Strength Training for Fibromyalgia Sufferers**

Strength training is highly recommended for fibromyalgia sufferers because of the wide variety of benefits it can offer. Recent studies performed by Harvard University have shown that a progressive regimen of strength training helps to reduce the [symptoms of fibromyalgia](#). Specifically, weight training helps to increase muscle strength and muscle mass, however, benefits of strength training also include:

- Strength training helps to reduce muscle pain and stiffness by encouraging daily use of all body parts.
- This type of training helps to improve your overall fitness level, increasing your energy and reducing your fatigue.
- Strength training has been shown to improve sleep habits, allowing you to fall asleep faster and remain in deep sleep longer.
- exercise of any type can help to improve your mood and alleviate symptoms of depression.

Strength training can also provide a number of other important benefits, like increasing your metabolism by up to 15% and reducing your risk of osteoporosis, a debilitating bone illness.

## **How to Strength Train**

The good thing about strength training is that it is safe and effective for practically anyone. Even if you are not in the greatest of health, you can still begin a moderate strength training routine and see amazing benefits. Strength training is most beneficial when combined with both a stretching and aerobics routine. However, strength training on its own will also help to reduce your symptoms.

## **Before Starting Strength Training:**

Before you start your strength training, consult with a health care professional to see if your muscles are up to it. Once your health care provider gives you the go ahead, you will need to find out about the specific exercises performed in strength training routines. Instructions and tips on strength training are available at your nearest gym or in exercise books and manuals at the library. If you can afford it, you might want to hire a professional trainer who can show you the techniques as well as any equipment you might like to use. Before working out for the first time, practice the techniques in front of a mirror, without using any weights. This will help you get a feel for the movements.

## **While Strength Training:**

When you first start strength training, remember to start with the smallest weight, or just use the weight of your own body - you do not want to overstress your body on the first time out. Don't focus on lifting a lot of weight; instead, focus on performing the techniques correctly, ensuring that you maintain good posture. Remember to breathe - breathe in as you lengthen your muscles, and breathe out as you contract your muscles. Start with only 3 to 5 repetitions of each exercise, fewer if you feel tired. Gradually increase the number of repetitions, until you can perform 10 to 12 repetitions. Try to do 2 or 3 sets of 10 to 12 repetitions before increasing your weight. Remember to rest in between sets

## **Tips to Stay Healthy During Strength Training**

When done properly, strength training can be very beneficial to fibromyalgia sufferers. This type of exercise can increase flexibility, endurance, and make everyday tasks like shopping and climbing stairs a lot easier. Here are some tips on how to keep your strength training safe and enjoyable:

- **Always do some light stretching before you strength train.** This will prevent muscle strains and sprains and get your muscles warmed up.
  - **Drink water as you strength train.** Water keeps you well hydrated, preventing muscle cramps.
  - **Avoid using weights or machines that you have to grip tightly.** This could put extra stress on your muscles and joints.
  - **Always progress slowly.** Start out doing just a few minutes of strength training exercises. Gradually work up to 20 minutes, three times a week.
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## Top 5 Foods to Avoid

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Fibromyalgia is a chronic condition where sufferers experience [widespread pain](#) that can be significantly debilitating. The pain is worse in certain parts of the body called tender points.

### Fibromyalgia Statistics

According to the National Fibromyalgia Association (NFA), 10 million people in the United States alone suffer from the condition. As much as six percent of the world's population suffers from fibromyalgia. At least three percent of the entire world's population is affected by this syndrome.

Women are the highest demographic group to get the condition, according to the NFA, with approximately 75 percent to 90 percent of those afflicted being female. Men can also get fibromyalgia and children have also been diagnosed with the syndrome.

### Treatment

There is no known cause of fibromyalgia. It's a difficult condition to treat since symptoms can vary drastically among those who have it.

Fibromyalgia can't be cured, but the symptoms can be treated to make life more manageable and fulfilling.

There are a variety of fibromyalgia medications. Those who have the condition can also try alternative therapies and make lifestyle changes to help manage the symptoms. One of the biggest and most effective lifestyle changes is diet.

There's no scientific evidence that proves a single diet plan will eliminate or reduce fibromyalgia symptoms.

The medical director of the Holtorf Medical Group Center for Endocrine, Neurological and Infection Related Illness in Torrance, California, Dr. Kent Holtorf, says that the medical community is aware that diet plays a role in the syndrome and severity of the symptoms. Unfortunately it's not clear exactly how and not every diet will help everyone in the same way.

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# Self Massage for Managing Fibromyalgia Pain (We are in training to be massage and acupuncorists, plus we sell and use excellent massagers for at home use.)

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Massage can be a very effective way to manage fibromyalgia pain. Ideally massage should be done by a registered remedial therapist, and possibly one with a specialty in fibromyalgia pain and pain from related disorders. But you can also use self massage to relieve some fibro symptoms between therapist treatments. Just be careful not to use self massage as the only fibromyalgia treatment and continue other treatments as well.

## Type of Fibromyalgia Pain

As you've probably experienced, fibromyalgia can cause [widespread pain](#). You can't treat the widespread pain, but you can treat some of the sorest or most tender points with self massage. While the muscle pain experienced can vary from person to person, there are a few points the majority of sufferers find uncomfortable. The pain is often localized and starts in the joints which then causes joint swelling. The joint swelling ultimately irritates the muscles. The muscles become painful, weaken and eventually cause mobility problems.

The neck and shoulders are two of the main areas fibromyalgia suffers experience muscular pain. These are the same spots non-sufferers experience pain because they're areas that naturally accumulate stress. But the pain can be more intense for fibromyalgia sufferers.

The chronic pain fibro afflicted experience can cause them to hold themselves differently. An unnatural stance can cause additional stress in the problem areas of the back, shoulders and neck.

## Trigger Point Massage

In many cases the pain in most [trigger points](#) can be relieved or reduced by just a little bit of pressure through simple self massage. Often a few moments of gentle rubbing a couple times a day can make a significant difference. Try treating yourself with six to 12 self massage treatments daily with each "session" consisting of 20 to 30 kneading strokes.

## General Massage Techniques

There's no specific hard and fast rule about how you should rub the trigger point. Depending on the location and the sensitivity of the sore point, you can rub with the pads of your fingertips or thumbs. You can even use your elbow, thumbs or fist. Press the trigger point directly and hold for several seconds. Or you can gently massage the area with small circles or kneading strokes. Try to stroke parallel to the muscle fibers, if you can tell their direction.

The goal is to provide some pressure. But as a fibromyalgia sufferer you know how sensitive those trigger points can be. Create an internal scale of one to 10 with 10 being insufferable and one being where you can barely feel anything. Aim for the five to seven range, if you can handle the discomfort. If you can't, be gentler. Rub or put pressure on the trigger point for at least 30 seconds and as long as five minutes. Try to treat key pressure points daily. You may want to consider treating ultra sensitive points several times a day.

## Use a Tennis Ball

Sometimes it's too painful to use your hands or other parts of your body to provide the necessary pressure on your tender points. Other times you may not have the strength to create sufficient pressure. That's where the proper use of a tennis ball can be especially beneficial.

A tennis ball for fibromyalgia self massage is very easy to use. All you need to do is find a way to rub the ball back and forth over the painful muscle. You can use your own body against body pressure. Or you can use a hard object like a wall and lean your body against it with the ball on the sore spot. For a deeper massage, simply use more pressure.

If treating pressure points using a wall, keep your feet 12 inches or more away from the wall to create enough pressure to relieve the pain.

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# Stretching (We use our Chi machine as part of this.)

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Exercise is an important and necessary part of any fibromyalgia treatment program. Fibromyalgia is a chronic illness that causes widespread pain, persistent fatigue, and a number of other debilitating symptoms. Though exercise can be difficult and painful for those suffering with fibromyalgia, it is an excellent way to increase muscle strength while decreasing muscle pain and stiffness.

If you are thinking about incorporating an exercise routine into your fibromyalgia treatment plan, stretching is an excellent way to begin improving both your symptoms and endurance levels. This article will provide with some of the basic information that you will need to know before you begin to stretch those muscles!

**How Does Stretching Benefit Fibromyalgia Sufferers?**  
Stretching is one of the best forms of exercise that someone with fibromyalgia can do. But maybe you need some reasons to stretch to get you motivated. Here are some of the many benefits of basic stretches:

- Stretches help to elongate your muscles, helping to release stiffness and pain.
- Simple stretching exercises increase your flexibility, allowing you to get the full range of motion in all of your joints. This will help with your daily activities, including shopping, driving, cleaning, and cooking.
- Stretching will provide you with some much-needed time to relax, practice meditation, or just get reacquainted with yourself.
- If you suffer from disordered sleeping, a daily stretching routine may help you to fall asleep faster and wake up less during the night.

**Types of Stretching**  
Though you may not realize it, there are actually many ways to stretch. Some forms are not suited to those suffering from fibromyalgia, as they put too much stress on the muscles and joints. Be sure to choose a stretching form that is recommended by your health care provider. Here are some popular forms of stretching to relieve fibromyalgia-related symptoms:

**Passive Stretching**  
Passive stretching is probably the type of stretching that you are most familiar with. This is the type of stretching that most people do when warming up or cooling down from an aerobic exercise. Passive stretching is also known as relaxed stretching, because you are in a relatively relaxed position when carrying out the exercises. During passive stretching, you stand or sit in a relaxed position. Using your arms or some other part of your body, hold the position for at least 10 seconds. Passive stretching is an excellent way to get rid of those troublesome muscle spasms caused by fibromyalgia.

**Isometric Stretching**  
Isometric stretching is also a relaxed form of stretching. It involves no motion – instead, you clench a muscle in order to strengthen it. For example, if you wish to do an isometric leg stretch, don't move your leg - just clench the thigh or calf muscle. After holding for a few seconds, relax the muscle again. These are easy exercises to do and can be done at home or at work. Isometric stretching is also a great way to increase your muscle strength and stamina.

**Active Stretching**  
Active stretching is a little bit more challenging for most fibromyalgia sufferers. However, if you work your way up to it, active stretching can really increase your flexibility and muscle strength. Assume a stretch and hold that body part using nothing but the strength of your muscles. For example, bring your knee to your chest and hold it there, without using your hands for assistance. Active stretches only need to be held for about 10 seconds.

**Dynamic Stretching**  
Dynamic stretching involves moving your body slowly, so that your joint has reached its full range of motion. For example, extending your leg out in front of you as far as it will go is a dynamic stretch. It is very important that you do not bounce or violently swing your body in order to reach your full range of motion – this can cause serious damage to your joints. Instead, carefully lift the body part you are stretching until it can't move any more. Always take your time when you are practicing dynamic stretching and if you can't reach your full range of movement, don't force yourself.

## **Tips for Good**

## **Stretching**

When you are stretching, keep these tips in mind so that you always have a fun, enjoyable and safe experience:

- Warm up before you start stretching. Take a bath or shower, or go for a quick walk around the house to get your muscles ready.
  - Never hold a stretch to the point of pain. Good stretches only go to the point where you feel some resistance in your muscles.
  - While you stretch, focus on your breathing. Breathe in deeply through your nose, and breathe out through your mouth.
  - Start your stretching routine slowly. Start with 1 repetition of each exercise, and gradually work up to five or more repetitions.
  - If a certain muscle is sore, do fewer repetitions of that stretch, or hold the stretch for a shorter amount of time. This will prevent injury.
  - If you are particularly stiff, try stretching in warm water. The warm water will help to relax your muscles, making the stretch less painful to hold.
  - If you are having trouble holding your stretches, ask a friend to help you out. Assisted stretching is just as beneficial as self stretching.
  - Try a stretching class. Yoga stretches can help restore your flexibility and strength as well as reduce your stress levels.
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# Supplements That May Help Fibromyalgia (We use our Go Green, Total Health Formula, & BetaLoo as part of this.)

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[Link](#)

Fibromyalgia syndrome comes with a host of symptoms, many of which resist improvement with standard therapies for the condition. Some practitioners therefore advise vitamin and mineral supplements for the possible benefits they may provide. Before you run to the store to pick up a jar of multivitamins, it's a good idea to get acquainted with the specific benefits of the various components in these preparations so that you have some idea of which ingredients should be listed on the label. Here's the lowdown on the various supplements and how they can boost and build your system:

**\*Vitamin C**-This vitamin aids the immune system because it increases the production of the cells that fight infection: B and T cells. Due to its acidifying effects on urine, C can prevent chronic bladder infections.

## Immune Function

**\*Vitamin D**-This vitamin helps to regulate the immune functions of the blood cells known as monocytes and neutrophils.

**\*Vitamin E**-This vitamin often helps to relieve pain in patients who suffer from concurrent chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS). E can improve sleep-interfering leg cramps.

**\*Amino Acids**-These include Glycine, Serine, Taurine, and Tyrosine. Amino acids provide the body with energy and are necessary for proper brain function.

## Mental Clarity

**\*B Vitamins**-Niacinamide, Thiamine, B6, Pantothenic Acid, Folic Acid, and B12, are necessary to produce the energy that fuels your body. They help prevent feelings of fatigue and "fibro-fog." B Vitamins are also essential for ridding lactic acid from your muscles which helps avoid sore muscles in fibromyalgia patients. B vitamins strengthen the immune system, bring mental clarity, and aid your concentration span. These vitamins play a crucial role in nerve repair and help relieve the symptoms of chronic fatigue syndrome. Studies have shown that many people with chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia syndrome exhibit Vitamin B deficiencies.

**\*Fructooligosaccharides (FOS)**-This is a sweetener derived from fruits and vegetables. FOS improves the concentration of good bacteria in the intestinal tract, leading to better digestion.

**\*Inositol**-Inositol, like Vitamin C boosts the immune system by increasing the cells that fight invading pathogens.

## Pain Relief

**\*Magnesium**-Magnesium in combination with malic acid supports the immune system by boosting the production of the cells that attack bacteria and other pathogens. Magnesium is also crucial for the relief of muscle pain.

**\*Malic Acid**-In combination with magnesium, malic acid serves to improve energy levels as it improves the function of the cells. Malic acid is a crucial element in muscle metabolism.

**\*Selenium**-Selenium boosts the production of antibodies which help to support the immune system.

**\*Zinc**-Zinc enhances the neutrophil activity that can aid in the healthy binding of antigens and antibodies to support the immune system.

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## • Healing FMS With Probiotics (We carry and excellent REFRIGERATED probiotic)

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- Most of us realize how lucky we are to have antibiotics for those times we have bacterial infections. But we may not realize that other bacteria are keeping us alive. These good bacteria are nourished through eating dairy foods such as yogurt, cottage cheese, and buttermilk. All of these foods share a common denominator: they all contain the opposite of antibiotics which are called "probiotics."
  - **Smart Idea**
  - Today, there is a trend to increase one's dietary and supplemental intake of probiotics. "It's a very smart thing to do," says Dr. Randall Trowbridge. Trowbridge is a physiatrist specializing in rehabilitation who prefers to treat his patients with an eye toward the holistic.
  - Dr. Tamara Sachs, an internist with a practice in functional medicine comments on the centrality of the gastrointestinal tract to a person's well-being, "For humans, 60 to 80 percent of the immune system is in the gastrointestinal tract." For that reason, she's in love with probiotics, "It's huge," says Sachs.
  - Another doctor who likes to use an integrative approach in treating his patients is Dr. Mitchell Prywes, who is the head of the Danbury Center for Pain Rehabilitation. "There is so much chronic pain," says Prywes. "But do we look at our environment, the air we breath, the food we eat?"
  - **Human History**
  - Sachs tells us that probiotics have been around as long as there has been human life on earth. Probiotics can even be found in raw vegetables but die off when subjected to the heat of cooking. Sachs also says that during the course of human history, we've learned to coexist rather well with probiotics and that there are some 500 strains with many more waiting to be identified.
  - These helpful bacteria serve a variety of functions. Because they help us digest food, they are a crucial element for good nutrition. "They produce things we can't do without," Sachs says, underlining the point that probiotics help us break down the fiber in food so that essential nutrients can be made available to the colon.
  - Sachs also tells us that probiotics help teach the immune system to differentiate between beneficial and dangerous invading bacteria. Probiotics can be used to treat diarrhea in adults and children and can also be a boon to the immune system, but the joy doesn't stop there. Beneficial bacteria may be helpful to people suffering from colitis and autoimmune disorders affecting the intestines.
  - **Gastrointestinal Problems**
  - Prywes says that he has found benefit in treating fibromyalgia patients with probiotics. He explains that such patients tend toward gastrointestinal issues that have been brought about by the use of antibiotics. "Use probiotics to treat the gastrointestinal problems, and I've seen the pain from fibromyalgia get better," said Prywes.
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# Fibromyalgia Self Care: Methyl-Sulfonyl-Methane (MSM) (We Stock several options for you. We carry a natural sulfur.)

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While MSM cannot cure fibromyalgia, this [nutritional supplement](#) is often used as a treatment of [fibromyalgia symptoms](#), helping relieve some of the discomfort that is associated with the disease and improve overall health. MSM is one of the latest treatments of fibromyalgia and relies on naturally occurring substances that can be found in many foods. This alternative fibromyalgia treatment has been shown to have beneficial properties for individuals living with fibromyalgia since it helps restore some of the deficiencies associated with fibromyalgia.

## What is MSM?

Methyl-sulfonyl-methane (MSM) is a compound containing a sulfur base that is naturally found in plants and animals. As such, MSM can be found in many foods, but much of it is lost in the process of digestion, cooking or food processing. This makes additional MSM supplements an option for some fibromyalgia patients.

MSM can be found in the following foods:

- most fresh fruits and vegetables
- most meats, fish and poultry
- most animal products such as dairy and eggs
- coffee, tea and chocolate

## Fibromyalgia and Protein

Studies have shown that individuals with fibromyalgia often have protein and sulfur deficiencies. A protein deficiency leads to an enzyme deficiency since the amino acids that are found in protein are used to build enzymes in the body. Amino acids play an important role in maintaining almost all of the functions of the body, including:

- the growth and repair of body tissues
- regulation of blood sugar levels
- food digestion
- immune system activity
- production of hormones

Amino acid deficiencies lead to other conditions related to fibromyalgia such as hypoglycemia or the inability to metabolize carbohydrates.

## MSM and Fibromyalgia

MSM has been used as a form of treatment of fibromyalgia since it helps restore some of the deficiencies associated with fibromyalgia. Some of the fibromyalgia symptoms that may be improved by MSM supplements include the following:

- helping restore sulfur deficiencies that can lead to cells that are impermeable by sugar, which causes blood glucose level imbalance
- reducing muscle soreness and cramps
- reducing the symptoms of arthritis and controlling degeneration
- allowing toxins and allergens to be cleansed from the body by increasing cell permeability and reducing water pressure in cells
- inhibits pain impulses due to anti-inflammatory properties
- improving and balancing the immune system
- increasing blood supply and circulation in the body

In addition, if taken in combination with other supplements, particularly amino acids, the benefits of MSM for fibromyalgia treatment has been shown to increase. When combined with glucosamine and chondroitin, MSM helps transport nutrients to damaged cartilage and tissue. When combined with enzymes such as serrapeptase, MSM helps to aid digestion.

## **MSM Treatment**

MSM supplements do not require a prescription and are available in several forms:

- capsules or tablets
- powders, flakes or crystals that are dissolved in liquids
- topical creams or gels

MSM is typically taken twice daily, with a total dosage of 1000-3000 mg.

Fibromyalgia is a highly individualized condition, and MSM does not work in every case. Speak to your doctor or health care provider before trying any new fibromyalgia treatments for recommendations on your particular case.

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# Vitamin and Mineral Supplements for Fibromyalgia

(We use our Go Green, Total Health Formula, & BetaLoe as part of this.)

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An integral part of any fibromyalgia diet is vitamin and mineral supplements. Daily vitamin supplements for fibromyalgia are an important element of *fibromyalgia self care*, as they can help to alleviate a variety of fibromyalgia symptoms. In addition, mineral and vitamin fibromyalgia supplements are an essential component of an individual's overall health, as well as an integral part of fibromyalgia alternative treatment and fibromyalgia medical treatment.

## Vitamins and Minerals: A Closer Look

Vitamins are an essential component to any healthy diet. Vitamins are needed for basic biological processes such as growth, nerve function and digestion. They also have an important function in providing the body with energy and with providing repair.

Minerals, on the other hand, are the nutrients that are the primary components of our teeth and bones, and are also the building blocks for enzymes and other cells in the body. Minerals also help to regulate fluid in the body and help to control nerve movement.

The best source for both vitamins and minerals are whole foods. This is because whole foods have the benefit of possessing the following characteristics:

- **complex nutritional value:** whole foods provide you with a wealth of vitamins and minerals, whereas vitamin and mineral supplements only provides you with a specific nutrient, making whole foods the best source for vitamins and minerals
- **fiber:** whole foods are an excellent source of fiber, which protects against heart disease and diabetes, among other health problems
- **protective substances:** whole foods also contain essential protective substances such as phytochemicals, which protect against heart disease, diabetes, cancer and high blood pressure

However, while dietary supplements are not food substitutes, daily vitamin supplements as well as daily mineral supplements can still have an important function in complementing a healthy fibromyalgia diet.

## Choosing the Best Supplements for Your Fibromyalgia Diet

Specific dietary supplements each have a unique role in maintaining and improving your health.

The following vitamins and mineral supplements should play a key role in the best diet for fibromyalgia:

- **calcium:** promotes muscle relaxation and promotes restful sleep
- **zinc:** also helpful in reducing muscle twitching and weakness as well as promoting relaxation and reducing feelings of anxiety
- **vitamin C:** promotes proper cell growth and it contains essential antioxidant properties
- **vitamin E:** develops strong muscles and strengthens the immune system by maintaining a healthy level of red blood cells

## Recommendations

When choosing fibromyalgia supplements, it is best to take into consideration which fibromyalgia symptoms most affect your daily life, in order to select the best vitamin supplements and mineral supplements for your individual case.

In general, however, a multivitamin is the best choice because it provides you with a comprehensive source of minerals and vitamins. Multivitamins also avoid hyperdoses of any one vitamin or mineral.

Always consult with your physician before taking any fibromyalgia diet supplements.

When using dietary supplements, be sure to check supply labels for the ingredients they contain and regularly check expiration dates. Also, be sure to store supplements in a cool, dry place and avoid storing nutritional vitamin supplements and mineral supplements in hot, humid places, such as in a bathroom.

# Apples For Fibromyalgia (Organic is you can find them/ get the wax off the others!)

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Everyone knows that old saying, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away," but is it true? Well, we know that apples are packed full of good stuff, all kinds of nutrients and fiber, and we know they're good for the teeth. So, yes—they're good for you and it's probable that to some extent, they keep you healthy so that you don't need to make an appointment with your doctor (you didn't think he still made house calls did you?). But can eating apples make a difference for people who suffer from fibromyalgia?

## Tailor Made

Let's take a look at the apple. It contains a number of good things that can help maintain or improve overall health, but it also seems, in some ways, tailor-made to manage the symptoms of fibromyalgia syndrome:

**\*Malic Acid**—this substance can give the cells a burst of energy while reducing tenderness and muscle pain. Apples happen to be one of the best stores of malic acid around.

**\*Fiber**—fibromyalgia patients need this to help combat gastrointestinal symptoms and to regulate glucose levels.

**\*Vitamin C**—this vitamin is crucial for the health of your tissues and bones and can also serve as a barrier to toxins.

**\*Quercetin**—the newest research suggests that quercetin can do a whole bunch of good things. It can improve your [mitochondrial](#) health, boost your energy, act as an antioxidant and serve as an anti-inflammatory agent.

## Eat Unpeeled

If you want to derive the full benefit of all the apple has on offer though, you'll need to eat the peel. Of course, you should wash the apple with thoroughness to make sure you've removed all the supermarket-pretty wax coating as well as the pesticide residues. Or better yet, spring for organic apples, even if they cost a bit more.

Apples are filling, so you can just about make a meal out of them if you like. If you add a slice of cheese or a handful of nuts, you've just added protein to the mix. They give you the right kind of energy and won't let you down the way caffeine does after an hour or so. Apples do seem to alleviate the achiness of the muscle pain that accompanies fibromyalgia for many sufferers and are a good choice if you have a low-tolerance for malic acid supplements.

Like anything else, what works for one fibro sufferer may not work for another. Some sufferers will swear by apples as a source for energy and relief from muscle aches while another will say they simply can't eat apples without feeling ill. Experts suggest you give apples a try and if they make you feel ill, just stop eating them. The ill-effects will be temporary and you will at least have tried this easy palliative and energy-boosting measure.

## The Foods

That said, there are certain foods and food groups that seem to make a difference in the severity of fibromyalgia symptoms for a large number of those who have the condition.

Here are the top five foods that seem to make symptoms worse. Eliminating them from your diet may reduce the severity of the fibromyalgia symptoms you experience.

### 1. Aspartame

This artificial sweetener seems to stimulate NMDA pain receptors which increase feelings of pain.

A 2006 study published in the *Journal of Rheumatology* showed that fibromyalgia patients already had more NMDA receptors in their skin and generally more activity in their peripheral nerves which made them more susceptible to experiencing pain.

The artificial flavor enhancer MSG seemed to have similar results according to a 2001 study published in the *Annals of Pharmacotherapy*.

## **2. Simple Carbohydrates and Sugar**

White bread and sugary foods seem to impact the severity of fibromyalgia symptoms as well as associated conditions like chronic yeast infections.

It is thought that the fungus that causes yeast infections thrives on sugar and that sugar causes a spike in blood sugar. When the spike drops dramatically, the fatigue experienced by all fibromyalgia sufferers appears worse.

## **3. Food Additives**

The chemical properties of any artificial flavor enhancer seem to also increase sensitivity in NMDA pain receptors and intensify pain symptoms.

Flavor enhancers can be found in a variety of canned foods, canned soups and even cold meats like bologna or ham lunch meats. Flavor enhancers are added to bacon and even some frozen foods.

Many pre-made types of Asian foods contain monosodium glutamate (MSG), one well-known flavor enhancer that negatively impacts the health of both fibromyalgia patients and non-fibromyalgia patients.

## **4. Nightshade Plants**

Some medical experts say that nightshade plants trigger fibromyalgia flares and even arthritis flares. The reason why isn't known, but many doctors have seen an improvement in fibromyalgia patients who have cut or reduced food from these types of plants from their diet.

Foods that come from nightshade plants include potatoes, tomatoes, eggplants, bell peppers and chili peppers.

## **5. Caffeine**

Many fibromyalgia sufferers make the mistake of turning to caffeine as a pick-me-up to fight fatigue. The caffeine high is usually followed by a period of time where fatigue seems worse, which leads the sufferer to drink more caffeine. Medical experts say that in fibromyalgia sufferers, caffeine can cause deeper and longer-lasting fatigue.

Cut chocolate, tea, coffee and colas from your diet and you'll likely notice a change in your fatigue level within a week.

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# Fibromyalgia and Carbohydrates

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When we think about carbohydrates, most of us think in terms of crackers, chips, bread, and sugars - what are known as simple or "fast-releasing" carbs. However, there are carbohydrates that are complex and "slow-releasing" and they come in the form of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans and lentils. Of the three classes of foods necessary for health and life, carbohydrates are probably the most important because they are what convert to energy in our bodies. Protein and fat, the other two parts of the food classification, metabolize slowly while carbohydrates metabolize more quickly. Simple carbohydrates, those that are fast-releasing, tend to give us a quick burst of energy followed by a slump. Since most simple carbs are refined foods like sugar and flour and lack vitamins and minerals necessary for proper assimilation into the body, they should be avoided. When complex carbs are ingested, the body knows exactly how to utilize them and gradually releases their potential energy. The added value is that complex carbohydrates also have the vitamins and minerals necessary for proper digestion and metabolism and fiber to keep the system running smoothly.

## Fibromyalgia and Hypoglycemia

One of the most common conditions in people suffering with fibromyalgia (FM) is [hypoglycemia](#) which is the body's inability to maintain normal sugar levels. In order for the body to have adequate and sustained energy, blood sugar levels need to remain steady. When they drop, as is the case with hypoglycemia, then brain and organ function suffers. The phrase "fibroglycemia" has been coined by some doctors because most people suffering with fibromyalgia are also hypoglycemic. Theoretically, FM is a nutrition/cellular problem and as such can be addressed effectively with diet, nutrition, [exercise](#), and stress control.

## What Happens When Blood Sugar is Out of Whack

Eating whole complex carbohydrates allows the body to break the foods down over a period of several hours (as opposed to a sudden burst that comes with simple carbs). As the foods are broken down slowly, glucose from the foods is absorbed into the bloodstream and works to maintain the blood glucose (sugar) level. When too much sugar, in the form of refined or simple carbs is absorbed into the body, the pancreas works overtime to produce insulin to deal with the sugar. The end result is a swift and sudden drop in blood sugar to lows that are not healthy. Hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar, carries with it the following problems:

- Cravings for sugary and starchy foods
- Depression
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Mood swings
- PMS
- Dizziness
- Inability to concentrate
- Fainting
- Heart palpitations and panic attacks

## How You Can Control Blood Sugar

For individuals dealing with fibromyalgia, all of these symptoms are part and parcel of their condition. That is why it is important for FM sufferers to ensure their blood sugar levels remain constant. Glucose stores deplete overnight, which means that breakfast is an important meal and necessary to maintain proper blood sugar levels. When you skip breakfast, or eat a breakfast that consists of sugary and starchy foods, the net result is a day of highs and lows, inability to concentrate and distraction. Skipping breakfast also puts a lot of stress on the adrenal glands and on the pancreas which leads to hypoglycemia and eventually to diabetes. If you have chronic hypoglycemia it is a clear indication that your organs are overworked and exhausted. The good news is that the condition is redeemable by:

- Eating a diet of nutritious, whole foods
- Combining a balance of protein, fat, and carbs
- Eating several small, balanced meals throughout the day rather than a couple of big meals
- Including nutritional supplementation as needed to ensure balanced nutrition

By understanding that different carbohydrates affect the body's ability to balance blood sugar differently, you can learn which foods are best suited for health. It is possible to lessen some of the negative effects of FM by eating a diet that does not strain the pancreas and adrenal glands.

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# Fibromyalgia, Weight Gain and Insulin

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Perhaps one of the most frustrating aspects of [fibromyalgia \(FM\)](#) is the weight gain that occurs in spite of efforts to keep your body at a healthy weight. It is not unusual for a person with FM to gain 25 to 30 pounds in the first year after developing the condition. Diets produce very mixed results because a person with FM is dealing with much more than eating too much. Often pain makes exercise difficult and medications can immobilize you.

## How Did I Gain All This Weight?

There are several factors that contribute to [weight gain with fibromyalgia](#):

- **Lack of Sleep.** Along with weight gain, sleep disturbance is a primary symptom of FM. The inability to get to the deep, level four sleep that is necessary for restoration of the cells in the body, means the metabolism is reduced which increases the need for the blasts of energy that come from high-sugar simple carbohydrates.
- **Hormonal Deficiencies.** Neuroendocrine abnormalities can be a contributing factor to weight gain. The imbalance and deficiencies of hormones such as serotonin, growth hormones, cortisol and thyroid hormone slows the body's metabolism down significantly. Insulin sensitivity is often increased as well.
- **Decreased Activity.** Because of pain many people with FM become sedentary and are not able to rev up their metabolisms with exercise so excess calories pile on as fat.
- **Medications.** Anti-depressants, a common medication given to people with FM, as well as some of the other medications prescribed for FM, cause weight gain.

## How Insulin Impacts Weight Gain

Research is now clearly showing a connection between weight gain in FM sufferers and insulin sensitivity. Insulin is a powerful and vitally necessary hormone in the body. Its function is to manage the storage of amino acids, magnesium and glucose (gained from carbohydrates) as energy for the body in the form of fat. Insulin also controls salt and water retention which not only impacts weight but also affects blood pressure, adrenalin increases and cholesterol.

Insulin sensitivity is essentially the way the body reacts to excess blood sugar (glucose). People with FM crave carbohydrates in order to keep energy up. Carbs convert to energy faster than protein and fat, and simple carbs (refined flour and sugar) convert to energy very quickly. With increased carb intake, the pancreas is stimulated to produce more insulin which should move blood sugar into the cells to be burned as energy. However, increased insulin sensitivity that is exacerbated by high carbohydrate intake causes the body to remove excess glucose from the blood. The glucose is then stored in the muscles, which are not designed to store glucose, and there the excess glucose is converted into fat. Things become more complicated as the insulin imbalance thwarts the use of carbs as energy for the person with FM. Cravings increase to fill the energy need and the body's inability to metabolize the carbs leads to increased fat production. It's a vicious cycle of craving, gaining, and the inability to lose weight.

In order to gain the upper hand in the insulin sensitivity realm, it is necessary to fill the energy needs in a way that is more conducive to health and less to gaining weight. Pain does make it difficult to exercise and since the metabolism is so slow, eating less doesn't usually make much of an impact. So, what is a person to do?



## 10 Ways to Gain Control

We offer ten suggestions to help gain control of weight while dealing with FM.

1. Build a diet around high-protein, low-carbohydrate foods. Good sources of high proteins include:

- lean meats
- eggs
- dairy products
- tofu,
- legumes
- fermented soy products

Use organically grown foods as much as possible.

2. Confine carbohydrate intake to complex carbs, like fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains.

3. Include good fats, such as plant and fish oils, almonds and avocados.

4. Sweeten with Stevia or Xylitol.

5. Avoid these foods:

- Sugars and other sweets
- Breads and pastas
- Rice
- Potatoes
- Partially hydrogenated oils
- Carbonated drinks
- Alcohol (except in moderation)

6. Always eat proteins first to activate the digestive enzymes then eat carbs.

7. Eat until you are full but not stuffed, eating slowly and chewing thoroughly.

8. Eat several small, well-balanced meals per day.

9. Include protein, carbs and fats with each meal or snack.

10. Give yourself a break from the regimen on weekends - a little indulgence allows for better adherence.

# Getting The Most From Your Bath

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Fibromyalgia is oh-so-hard to cope with sometimes, and there are days when exercise and medication just don't seem to do the trick. On days like those, you may find yourself wracking your brains trying to think of something, anything that might make you feel better. You need to find a bit of extra motivation to keep going.

## Grandma Knew

Look no further than your bathroom for relief. Your grandmother always said that there's nothing much that a bath can't fix. A nice, long soak may be just the ticket to put some steam into your motor and get you going.

To your **morning bath/day bath (not late evening as it will keep you up)** add 1Cup of 3% of **Food Grade** Hydrogen Peroxide (**Food grade only**), mix in well with running tap water. Boost energy and help with pain relief.

3% of **Food Grade** Hydrogen Peroxide available at our on site store [www.jonilund.com](http://www.jonilund.com)

## Bridge The Gap

Conversely, a warm bath may help soothe you enough to lull you to sleep after a wearying day of battling your condition. There are times when the fatigue seems overwhelming, but it never fails to surprise us just how fatigue can linger without ever resulting in restful sleep. Sometimes a special bath can help bridge the gap between fatigue and elusive sleep.

Here are some tips for making the most out of bath time:

\*Darken the room but provide some soft light with candles.

\*Make sure the bath isn't too hot. Too hot equals poor circulation and fatigue. You want to lull yourself to sleep, not wipe yourself out.

## Self-massage

\*Treat yourself to a self-massage just before you have your soak. Start with your temples, move down to your neck muscles, and on down to your upper arms. Massage your hands, then your thighs, calves, and feet.

\*Listen to music, or if you prefer, wear ear plugs to block out distracting household noise.

\*Place an oil burner in your bathroom and use any essential oils that you like. For serenity, try: frankincense, germanium, lavender, and ylang ylang.

\*If your eyes feel very tired, try wearing an eye mask during your soak.

**1) Bath of Roses:** Add 6-8 drops of rose essential oil to your tub. Give your face an occasional spritz of rose water as you soak. Throw in some rose petals (from unsprayed roses) for good measure. Nosh on good quality dark chocolate, and listen to love songs. Repeat the following mantra, "Every cell in my body is healthy and loved."

Also works wonders in this bath is **Bath Relax** from us at [www.jonilund.com](http://www.jonilund.com)

## Slow Down

**2) Slow Down Bath:** This bath recipe is for days when you feel rushed and harried and feel desperate for calm. Add to your bath the following essential oils:

6 drops ylang ylang

4 drops Vetiver—this herb lifts depression and removes the burnout feeling.

# Heat Therapy (Using our Infrared Red Ray Hot House works wonders)

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We all enjoy relaxing into a warm, soothing bath now and again. It's amazing how something as simple as warm water can help melt away those aches and pains. This is why fibromyalgia sufferers often look to heat therapy to help reduce the severity of widespread pain, fatigue, and tight muscles. If you are suffering from the [symptoms of fibromyalgia](#), you may be interested in trying your own form of heat therapy. Heat therapy is a simple, inexpensive, and effective way to help you get back in the swing of things again.

## **What is Heat Therapy?**

Heat therapy has been around pretty much since heat has existed. Hippocrates was one of the first physicians to use heat therapy, and that was around 400B.C. Now, heat therapy is enjoying a comeback as an excellent way to reduce the severity of chronic pain.

Heat therapy is actually a pretty simple concept. Any treatment that uses heat to help soothe pain, relax muscles, or ease stress can be classified as a form of heat therapy. Heat therapy is very popular because it can be done by pretty much anyone and for very little cost. If you have a bathtub or a shower, or even a hot facecloth, you can perform your very own heat therapy treatment. Recently, more complex forms of heat therapy, such as ultrasound and paraffin waxing, have come into the spotlight, and they are now being used in pain clinics, hospitals, and spas across North America and Europe.

## **How Heat Helps**

Though it is usually a very simple form of treatment, heat therapy is actually quite ingenious in the way that it relieves pain and muscle stiffness. When applied to sore areas of the body, heat helps to dilate your blood vessels. This encourages blood to rush to the affected area, flushing out toxins and other wastes. This blood also brings oxygen to the site, which helps to repair soft tissue, encourage muscle tone, and relax muscles contractions.

Heat therapy also lessens the severity of pain symptoms, though it is not completely understood why. It is thought that heat may help to numb the nerve endings inside your body, thereby decreasing your sensations of pain.

## **Heat Relief and Fibromyalgia Symptoms**

Heat therapy is not recommended for every type of muscle and joint pain. Heat can make pain that is caused by inflammation even worse. This means that people facing arthritis and other inflammatory diseases should stay away from heat therapy. But because fibromyalgia pain is not caused by inflammation, heat therapy is an ideal choice for symptom relief.

Here are a few ways in which heat therapy can benefit your fibromyalgia pain:

- Helps to relax stiff and tense muscles, promoting flexibility and increased range of motion
- Works to reduce fibromyalgia symptoms, particularly around tender points on the body
- Helps to relieve tension, lessening chronic headaches
- Reduces stress, thereby promoting restful sleep and reduction in overall symptoms

## **Types of Heat Therapy**

Heat therapy treatments are classified according to how deeply the heat penetrates the body. Depending upon your pain severity, one type of therapy may be more beneficial than the other. There are two major types:

**Superficial Heat Therapy:** Superficial heat therapy does not penetrate deep into your soft tissue. Instead, it provides heat to the skin and just beneath the skin's surface. Hot packs and heating pads are types of superficial heating.

**Deep Heat Therapy:** Deep heat therapy penetrates well beneath the skin, right into the core of your muscles. Heat provided by ultrasound and whirlpool baths are forms of deep heating.

## **Therapies to Try**

If you are suffering from severe pain or stiffness with your fibromyalgia, give heat therapy a try. Here are a few of the most effective and popular techniques among fibromyalgia patients. Remember to consult with your health care provider before trying any type of treatment for fibromyalgia.

**Hot**

Hot packs are probably the most popular form of heat therapy. They are especially useful for relieving muscle spasms and the soreness caused by restless leg syndrome. Hot packs and similar heat therapy products are widely available, both on the Internet and at your local drugstore. You can also make your own hot packs by soaking a facecloth or towel in hot, steaming water. Simply place the hot pack over the affected area. Leave it on for 8 to 10 minutes to achieve maximum relief. Then remove the hot pack and gently stretch out the affected area. Whatever you do, never lie on top of a hot pack – it could burst, leaving you with some bad burns.

**Packs****Whirlpool**

Whirlpool baths are also very popular among fibromyalgia sufferers. This is because they offer deep heat penetration and help to relieve emotional stress. If you are lucky enough to have a whirlpool bath, then you are one step ahead of the game. If you don't have one, you could try contacting your local spa or gym to see if you can use theirs. Whirlpools are particularly effective because they circulate water all around the affected muscle. This increases circulation better than other forms of heat therapy. Some whirlpools also have jet massagers, which use water to work out tense muscles.

**Baths****Paraffin**

Paraffin waxing is just coming into its own as a form of heat therapy. It is often used in spas to help restore moisture and skin elasticity to the hands and feet. Because it delivers sustained heat to specific areas, it has also proven helpful in reducing fibromyalgia pain. All you need is some paraffin wax, which you melt down to a warm temperature. Dip the sore area into the wax and pull it out again, allowing the wax to dry. Repeat this process until you have a good, solid covering of wax over the affected area. Wrap up the area, wax and all, in a towel, and keep it on for 20 minutes. Then simply peel off the wax.

**Waxing**

To find a day spa in your area, check your yellow pages or call your local operator.

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## Therapeutic Baths (Many essential oils available from us @ [www.jonilund.com](http://www.jonilund.com))

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Fibromyalgia syndrome is very frustrating to treat. Some days are worse than others and you may feel like crawling under the covers to never come out. That's when it's time to take a deep breath (even if it hurts) and get a little proactive.

### Aromatic Baths

One thing you can do is take a bath. That's right—a bath. The well-known father of medicine, Hippocrates, stated, "The way to health is to have an aromatic bath and scented massage every day."

### Nothing To Lose

Centuries after Hippocrates death, folks saw the soothing sense in taking a nice, hot bath when feeling poorly. Some bath devotees have even created certain rituals, added candlelight, or herbs and scents. Sometimes even music has a place in the bathing ritual. Skeptical? Stop scoffing and give our bath recipes a try. You have nothing to lose, and you may even find you feel better after a good, long soak.

### So Calm

**\*Calming Bath Recipe**—The main ingredient in this nerve calming bath is Epsom salts. Epsom salts contain magnesium which is a mineral integral to the workings of your nervous system and adrenal glands. The salts relax your muscles, reduce swelling, and sedate the nervous system.

Add 1 cup of Epsom salts to your bath as it runs. Place some tea lights around the darkened bathroom to give a soft light and play some soothing, tranquil music to accompany your bath. If you like, say this mantra, composed by the Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh:

Breathe in--"I calm my body"

Breathe out--"I smile"

Rid your mind of all urgent errands and thoughts and attempt to stay in and enjoy the moment.

### Sleepy Bath

**\*Sleep Bath Recipe**—Chamomile flowers have important homeopathic properties and can encourage restful sleep. Take a handful of fresh chamomile flowers and place them in a bowl of hot water. Steep the flowers in the water for 20 minutes. Place your face over the bowl and cover your head and the bowl with a towel. Inhale the steam for a few minutes.

Strain the tea into your bath and bathe while holding two warm chamomile tea bags over your eyes. Drink a cup of chamomile tea, as well. Even more effective is to purchase homeopathic pellets of chamomile and take the remedy under your tongue along with the tea, the bath, and etc. Concentrate on your breathing and give your body permission to relax into drowsiness.

### Cleanse And Detoxify

**\*Yogic Cleansing Bath**—Soak in this bath for 20 minutes every day for a week. This bath is meant to detoxify the body and clean out negative thoughts from your mind. Add to your bath 1 pound of baking soda, and 1 cup of sea salt. Harp music or Tibetan bell music is a good accompaniment to this bath.

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# Sleep Strategies for Fibro Sufferers

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## How Fibromyalgia Affects Sleep

Perhaps one of the best-known symptoms of fibromyalgia is sleep difficulties. It seems that no matter how many hours a person with fibromyalgia spends in bed, sleep is rarely the restful gift it should be. There are several sleep problems associated with fibromyalgia that include:

- Insomnia
- Difficulty falling asleep
- Frequent awakenings through the night
- Sleep interruptions even in deep sleep
- Restless leg syndrome
- Sleep apnea

Fibromyalgia sufferers are very familiar with the feeling of waking up the next day feeling as though they hadn't slept a wink the night before. Fatigue, exhaustion and a lack of energy contribute to the familiar fibro fog that follows interrupted sleep. Additionally, the pain cycle is exacerbated by insufficient or interrupted sleep. The combination of pain and sleep disturbance feed one another - the pain keeps the person awake and lack of sleep makes the pain worse. Research has shown that inadequate sleep, especially slow wave sleep, decreases tolerance for pain and increases levels of discomfort and fatigue. Chronic pain, worsened by sleep disturbance is also connected to the statistic that 20% of fibromyalgia patients also have depression or anxiety disorder.

## How To Improve Sleep

Getting a good night's sleep can be challenging for a fibromyalgia sufferer, but there are some strategies that can help improve sleep and may be helpful in decreasing pain, fatigue and fibro fog. Along with these strategies, asking the doctor for a suitable sleep medication may also be beneficial.

- Don't oversleep. Get only the amount of sleep that is necessary to feel refreshed and healthy the following day. Excessive time in bed seems to augment shallow sleep.
- Keep a sleep diary. Recording the quality of sleep and triggers that may have caused disturbance gives good insight into sleeping problems.
- Wake up at the same time each day. Circadian rhythm benefits by going to bed and getting up at the same time each day.
- Exercise regularly. Exercise is beneficial because it promotes better-quality sleep. Just don't exercise too close to bedtime (avoid exercise three hours before bedtime).
- Minimize sound disturbances as much as possible by sleeping in a sound-attenuated bedroom.
- Avoid long naps in the day. Long naps affect night sleeping.
- Keep room temperature cool for sleeping.
- Have a light snack before bed. Hunger can either keep a person awake or wake them up.
- Avoid beverages like coffee, tea, and alcohol before bed.

## Learning to Relax

Along with these strategies, easing into bedtime feeling relaxed can help ensure a relaxed night's sleep - hopefully without disturbance. Some ways to relax before going to bed include:

- A warm bath to soothe and relax the body
- Stimulating blood flow in the skin with a loofah while in the tub
- Use a self-massage device (like tennis ball or wooden roller) to relieve painful tender points
- Do some yoga or stretching to relax and elongate congested muscles
- Listen to calming music
- Meditate
- Use an eye mask to ensure the sleeping space is dark
- Use a white noise machine if necessary to keep the room as quiet as possible
- Make sure the room is a comfortable temperature - too cold is as bad as too hot

## Other Therapies for Sleep Disturbance

There are also a number of therapies that can be useful to securing a good night's sleep. Sleep problems can be addressed through:

- Biofeedback
- Relaxation training
- Stress reduction
- Cognitive therapy

People who can handle stress properly are also better able to sleep. They can usually handle the symptoms of fibromyalgia much better as well. When a person is stressed out, the symptoms become worse, including insomnia. Medications can be useful to help ease fibromyalgia pain or to help with sleep. There is no single therapy to control fibromyalgia pain and symptoms completely. The best way to deal with sleep disturbance is to blend a variety of strategies until the right individual combination surfaces.

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# Omega-3s and Back Pain (Check with a QUALIFIED DR. adrenal fatigue, see our article on this subject. A must read when I get it in print!)

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Are you constantly popping [over-the-counter pain killers](#) for your neck and back pain? Wishing there was another, more effective way to alleviate your discomfort? Perhaps there is, through omega 3 fatty acids.

Omega-3s, also known as polyunsaturated fatty acids, are broken down into three types: alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) and are typically found in vegetables, vegetable oil and fish. Known to be beneficial to both mental and physical health, a new study suggests that omega-3's may also help to greatly reduce neck and back pain.

## **Dangers of Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs**

About 70 million people in the United States take prescribed non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) for their chronic pain. Although helpful when used occasionally, these drugs have many adverse side effects, like stomach ulcers, when used regularly and some are known to have dangerous side effects when taken with other medications. Over the years, almost 20,000 people have died from the use of NSAIDs in the U.S. alone. These alarming numbers suggest people should pay attention to studies on the benefits of omega-3 fatty acids as an alternative pain relief method.

## **Omega 3: Nature's Pain Relief?**

In a study conducted by the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, 125 people with spine pain who normally took anti-inflammatory drugs were surveyed to see how omega 3 capsules would affect their discomfort. After being prescribed an omega-3 supplement, participants took 2400mg of omega-3s along with their regular NSAIDs for two weeks. After this, they were given 1200mg of omega-3s per day and asked to stop taking their NSAIDs.

At the end of the study, 60% of study participants noted a reduction in their pain levels. In fact, the omega-3 supplements were so effective, 59% of participants indicated that they had discontinued their use of NSAIDs altogether while 88% said they planned to continue with the omega-3 EFA supplements. No side effects were noted during the study.

The study's authors noted that omega-3s have a well established anti-inflammatory mechanism. In particular, the fatty acids convert into anti-inflammatory prostaglandins. Previous research has found omega-3 to reduce the production of arachidonic acid in painful areas of the body.

## **Pros of Omega-3 fatty Acids**

There are a number of benefits to taking omega-3s, including:

- Inhibits the clotting of blood
- Decreases pain
- Boosts the immune system
- Expands blood vessels

Additionally, the FDA has noted that omega-3 EFAs are able to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease.

## **Cons of Omega-3 Fatty Acids**

While being able to help the body in many ways, omega-3s, particularly when taken in capsule form, can have some drawbacks. Some of the possible risks associated with consuming too much omega-3 may include:

- Omega 3 overload can lead to excessive bleeding
- Stroke
- Lowering the immune system's response
- Causing heart problems for people with a history of heart conditions
- Causing glycemic disturbance among diabetics
- Omega-6 deficiency
- Increasing LDL cholesterol
- Potentially harmful to those people who have disorders of the blood or those on blood-thinning medication. Additionally, while fish is an excellent source of omega-3s, some fish, such as shark, swordfish, king, mackerel, and tilefish, may contain environmental contaminants. Women that are pregnant should avoid consuming these fish as a source of omega-3 and instead look for omega-3 supplements made from the body of fish.



## **Omega-3**

## **Safety**

The main health issue when taking omega-3 fish oil supplements is that the supplements may contain trace chemicals and heavy metals, like mercury, PCBs, lead, arsenic, cadmium, dioxins. To avoid these health risks, consumers should opt for omega-3 products that are distilled of contaminants at the molecular level. The Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN), World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Fish Oils Standard (IFOS) have published standards for levels of contaminants in fish oil.

## **Significance**

**for**

## **Fibromyalgia**

## **Sufferers**

Most of the research that has been done regarding the potential of omega-3 fatty acids to reduce pain has been on arthritis sufferers. While it is thought that fibromyalgia sufferers should also benefit from omega-3 pain relief in much the same way, further research needs to be done to determine the exact health benefits to fibromyalgia sufferers.

## **Sources**

**of**

## **Omega-3**

**Fatty**

## **Acids**

Omega-3s come in a variety of food products. High levels of omega-3s are found in oily fish like tuna, salmon, herring, mackerel, anchovies, and swordfish. Non-fish sources of omega-3s include flax and flaxseed oil, chia seeds, perilla, walnuts, lingonberry and hemp. Omega-3 is also present in vegetables and vegetable oils, and in eggs supplemented with DHA.

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# Eliminate Fibro Trigger Factors

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No matter how well you adhere to a treatment program, your **fibromyalgia symptoms** will never completely go away if you don't address the underlying perpetuating factors. Here are some ways for you to tackle these problems and begin to take control of your fibromyalgia.

**Breathe** **Correctly**  
When you breathe, your abdomen should expand when you inhale and contract when you exhale. If you breathe shallowly you may be starving your body and its muscles of oxygen. Lack of oxygen has been noted to cause tender points and may perpetuate the pain associated with fibromyalgia. It also contributes to fatigue.

**Maintain** **Good** **Posture**  
While many fibromyalgia treatments can help patients reduce their pain and relax their muscles, posture training is often required to undo lifelong bad habits which increase pain. Maintaining a good posture helps to re-educate muscles and joints that have become mechanically misaligned due to years of poor posture.

Poor posture can cause muscle stiffness and muscle pain. Due to the amount of time that many of us spend sitting in front of a computer, we often develop the classic upper cross posture, with our back slouched back, shoulders rolled forward, head forward. Try not to slouch when sitting at work or relaxing at home.

**Minimize** **infections**  
Common colds and infections can put an extra load on the body of a fibromyalgia sufferer. People with fibromyalgia may be even more prone to bacterial or viral infections because their immune systems may be worn down due to sleep deprivation. A new infection will put an additional stress on your immune system and, in turn, cause your fibromyalgia symptoms to worsen. Therefore eat a healthy diet, practice good hygiene, and follow a healthy lifestyle to minimize your chances of developing additional medical problems.

**Try** **Some** **Lifestyle** **Changes**  
Several aspects of your day-to-day life may be contributing to the severity of your symptoms. Some of these may be easily altered in order to reduce your pain and suffering. Some of the more important things that you can do to improve your health and decrease your symptoms are:

- If you are a smoker, quit!
- Cut down on the amount of alcohol you consume or eliminate it entirely.
- Try to maintain regular hours and don't stay up too late or get up too early.
- Minimize the amount of shift work you have to do.
- Don't overwork your body and try not to push yourself beyond your limits.
- Drink plenty of water, at least 8 glasses a day. Limit consumption before bedtime, however, to avoid being awakened by a full bladder during the night.

**Prepare** **for** **Seasonal** **Changes**  
As a fibromyalgia sufferer, you may notice that your health declines in the spring and fall, with more rapid temperature, moisture and barometric extremes. During these times dress in layers and be especially mindful of drafts. Avoid sitting under air conditioners or heating ducts. Get in the habit of checking the weather every morning, so you know what the day has in store for you.

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