

Article 4: Fibromyalgia and Chronic Fatigue
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Recent studies show that fibromyalgia patients show abnormal increase in neurotransmitters that signal pain.¹

The Mayo Clinic recommends these forms of alternative medicine: acupuncture, massage therapy, yoga, and tai chi.

The French "Haute Autorité de Santé" recommends at least 30 minutes of activity per day, adapted to the capabilities of the patient. Also recommended is balnéothérapie, psychological support, and possibly certain medications, with frequent follow-up visits to monitor the effectiveness of the treatment.

One book describes Fibromyalgia patients as being in a permanent "fight-or-flight" state. Another as generalized anxiety?

Most sources are in agreement that these are primary contributing causal factors for fibromyalgia:

- 1) Bad Habits of Thought / Stress
- 2) Bad Habits of Action
- 3) Bad Diet / digestive system out of balance / Bad transit (>2 days between BM's)
- 4) Bad sleep
- 5) Stressful situations and people
- 6) Manageable work
- 7) Muscular damage – initial – see article "Massage for Women's Pain" ²

The solutions generally proposed are similar to:

- 1) Bad Habits of Thought:
 - a) Belief in "No Pain, No Gain" (or "it is necessary to suffer") is not helpful.
 - b) Trying to fix problems for other people. Taking too much on ourselves.
 - c) We all need to take responsibility for our own health and not rely too much on doctors – they do not live in our bodies.
 - d) Stress is a choice. There are always stressful situations – we can choose to be stressed or we can just do what we can do (and learn what we cannot do).
 - e) Fear of being touched in a therapeutic way.
 - f) Rigidity / inflexibility
 - g) Inability to calm their thoughts
- 2) Bad Habits of Action
 - a) Some exercise regularly is better than none – park at the far end of the parking lot – get off the bus a stop early and walk.
 - b) Too much and / or too infrequent exercise contributes to muscular damage.
 - c) Minimize medications.

¹ <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/fibromyalgia/basics/causes/con-20019243>
Clauw DJ, Arnold LM, McCarberg BH (September 2011). "The science of fibromyalgia"
Mayo Clin Proc **86** (9): 907–11. [doi:10.4065/mcp.2011.0206](https://doi.org/10.4065/mcp.2011.0206)

² <http://www.painless-deep-tissue-massage.com/articles/en-003a.html>

3) Bad Diet

- a) Eliminate ALL artificial sugars and fats.
- b) Keep sugar and salt use low.
- c) Avoid processed foods – READ THE LABELS – too many chemicals? Don't eat it!!
- d) Eat lots of fresh, colorful produce.
- e) Avoid excessive meat / fish consumption, but consume protein in balance. Avoid cheaply-produced meats – too many hormones / antibiotics / other chemicals in the feed.
- f) Eat smaller portions of higher-quality foods – actually costs less and is more satisfying in the long run.
- g) Maintain a diversified and balanced nutrition.

4) Bad Sleep

- a) Try recommendations for insomnia³

5) Stressful situations and people

- a) Work to reduce these situations
- b) Learn how to put an emotional distance when you do have to put up with them.

6) Manageable work

- a) All of my clients who are not retired want to get back to work. Problems arise if they must go back to work before they are ready or if they must go back to a too-stressful job.
- b) Administrative support should be designed to HELP clients return to work as it becomes possible for them to do so, without excessive paperwork and effective support to help them complete any necessary paperwork.

7) Muscular Damage

- a) Learn how to adapt to your reduced functionality.
- b) Do less in order to control your pain.
- c) Live a smaller life.
- d) Become disabled.
- e) Become totally exhausted with the necessary restrictions and continual monitoring. (Chronic Fatigue anyone?)

For items 1) - 6), I basically agree with the standard treatments, although I added a few non-traditional opinions of my own.

For item 7), I disagree completely, as you might already have noticed if you have read my previous articles.

My disagreement is supported by the study I have been doing since 2013.⁴

The following is copied directly from "Article 1 - About Pain":

" To date, I have worked with 17 participants, 5 of which were uncomfortable receiving massages from a man, one had a brain tumor (that was successfully removed - she just started back working with me), one needed both her hips replaced (she is now doing quite well), one had liver problems, and two were injured in car accidents. Of these, 8 (out of 12) reached a QIF / FIQ score of less than 40 at some point in our work. I continue doing maintenance with 3, am in the early treatment stages with 2 of the 12, and am in the process of adding a couple more.

³ <https://www.painscience.com/articles/insomnia.php>
<http://inpes.santepubliquefrance.fr/CFESBases/catalogue/pdf/1215.pdf>

⁴ http://www.painless-deep-tissue-massage.com/articles/Preliminary_Results_Article-Latest-summary.pdf

What I find especially interesting is the progression of their work. At the beginning of our work, I encourage 1-2 massages per week for about 16 massages (typically over about 3 months).

What generally happens is that they can do more and more (indicated by a reduction in their QIF / FIQ scores), but their pain does not decrease much (indicated by pain scores before and after every massage).

My explanation for this: fibromyalgics typically push to do everything they possibly can, so when they can do more, they will do more, up to a certain level of pain. When they progress to the point to where they can do everything they want to do, continuing massage work then brings their pain levels down, as well.

For many, after the first 3 months, with significant reductions in their QIF / FIQ scores, they begin to restart old behaviors that had pushed them into fibromyalgia. At this point, they can truly understand what their old behaviors did to them and have a choice -- work on the behaviors, or continue with some level of dysfunction / pain (and need continuing maintenance massages)."

Effects of "Painless Deep Tissue Massage" (PDTM):

Aside from the clearing of Trigger Points, doing deep massage without adding pain has several additional effects; in general, people with fibromyalgia have had to disconnect from their bodies to try to do anything. Because of the necessarily interactive nature of PDTM, they gradually start to be able to re-connect with their bodies. Their pain becomes less of a burden and more of an opportunity to improve how they do things.

After several months of work, one of my clients, Eva, told me that she was very proud of herself; she had been helping her mother move a bookcase. She paid attention to her body and stopped doing something that she knew would hurt her, changed HOW she was doing the work, and completed the job without doing damage to herself.

Many people with fibromyalgia frequently have chronic fatigue also. And most people with chronic fatigue also have some pain. Having to be perpetually vigilant to everything you are doing and how you are doing it in order to avoid pain is exhausting.

As my clients have progressed, and especially if they persist in working on the perpetuating factors of fibromyalgia, as their pain disappears, their chronic fatigue disappears as well.

NEXT - Article 5: How to do "Painless Deep Tissue Massage"

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