



FIBROMYALGIA CURED

KAREN CLARKSON

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Karen Clarkson  
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## Introduction

“It’s like having the flu, 24 hours a day, seven days a week,” you tell a friend. “And you know how annoying and downright exhausting the flu can be.”

Your friend nods in sympathy, but you know she doesn’t fully understand the inherent suffering you’re going through.

“But the worst part,” you continue, “is going to the doctor and having him dismisses you. I can’t tell you how many physicians I visited who didn’t believe me. All the tests had come up negative. They told me my pain was all in my head.”

The disorder you suffer from is fibromyalgia. And while you’re frustrated that doctors fail to believe – let alone understand – your level of pain, one of the reasons for this is abundantly clear. It has only been within the last 15 years that fibromyalgia has even been recognized within the medical community as a ***tangible, physical disorder***.

If you have fibromyalgia, you’ve probably heard that as well. It’s hard to tell how many really have it. Approximately five to seven percent of the population are currently diagnosed with it, according to one source. One physician estimates that this disorder affects 3 million to 6 million people in the United States alone. This disease, for reasons science has yet to discover, is becoming increasingly more prevalent.

Curiously, more women than men develop fibromyalgia. The women who develop this disorder tend to be between the years of 35 and 55. Yet, it’s not really limited to any age group. Even children have been diagnosed with fibromyalgia. But more puzzling – confounding to doctors attempting to diagnose it – is that the symptoms vary widely from person to person.

One more note on the rate of incidence: it tends to occur more often in the colder climates than the warmer one.

## **Pain that seems to pierce the soul**

Fibromyalgia is a chronic condition – that means it's long-term – distinguished by generalized pain that settles in your muscles, ligaments and tendons. Additional symptoms include spots on the body that are tender to the touch with no apparent cause. Then there's the fatigue that seems to reach into your very soul that is so characteristic of fibromyalgia.

It's difficult enough for doctors that the symptoms of fibromyalgia differ from individual to individual. But, the symptoms may also vary day by day – or even hour by hour – for the same individual. That's right! The symptoms of this insidious disease can fluctuate depending on the state of such factors as the weather, the level of stress you're experiencing, the amount of physical activity you're performing and even – believe it or not! – something as trivial as the time of day it is.

Still wondering whether you may have fibromyalgia? Here are a few signs and symptoms to help you identify your pain as that of fibromyalgia. First, if just about every part of your body hurts, you may want to think about fibromyalgia. What's more, if you apply pressure to specific areas of your body – especially the back of your head or your upper back – and you feel pain, consider this as an indication you may have developed this chronic condition.

And if all of this is accompanied by a general stiffness that encompasses your entire body – especially if it has lasted for several months with little relief – you may indeed be a victim of fibromyalgia.

But wait, there's still one more way to identify your symptoms as fibromyalgia. Fatigue. Sleep disturbances. You never seem to get as much sleep as you truly need. Or perhaps you wake up tired even though you get more than enough sleep. Some researchers have figured out that this might be due to the fact that in reality those symptoms are due to an interrupted sleep pattern. For many people with this disease,

it's virtually impossible to experience restful deep sleep. Bursts of brain activity frequently interrupt brain activity that resembles being awake.

If you have fibromyalgia, you may also be bothered with irritable bowel syndrome (does the list of associated problems never end?) It's not uncommon to experience the constipation, diarrhea, the bloating and the uncomfortable abdominal pain of IBS. Just what you needed, more pain!

I know what you're thinking: there must be some part of the body that goes unscathed, free from the constant pain of fibromyalgia. Well, I'll give you one hint – it's not your face. Indeed, many people complain that they also experience facial pain. This tenderness and soreness may very well be related to that found in the neck and shoulders.

And many who develop fibromyalgia also are troubled with recurrent headaches as well as temporomandibular joint dysfunction. You're probably more familiar with this last disorder as TMJ. This is the pain that affects the jaw joints as well as the surrounding muscles.

Those persons dealing with this chronic disease also seem to be plagued with a heightened sensitivity. It's not unusual for many with this disease to report that their senses are working overtime. And while they say their sense of touch is enhanced, so are their senses of smell and sight. Doctors have yet to figure out why that should be.

## **Fibromyalgia: By any other name . . .**

Perhaps you're thinking that all those symptoms sound familiar, but you're not familiar with the term fibromyalgia. And that very well could be the case, since this disease has also been labeled with several other names, including fibrositis, chronic muscle pain syndrome, tension myalgias and even psychogenic rheumatism.

Medical experts now believe that fibromyalgia may be related to chronic fatigue syndrome, the disease that first appeared in the 1980s and touched the lives of so many people – again mostly women. And now, they believe that the two of these disorders may also be linked somehow to the Gulf War Syndrome, which many soldiers contracted as a result of the tours of duty in the first Gulf War in the early 1990s.

Fibromyalgia remains one of the great mysteries of the medical community. And it appears that it won't be revealing its secrets anytime soon.

## Chapter 1: What Causes Fibromyalgia?

“Doctor, what caused my fibromyalgia?”

This is probably about the time that your physician wishes he were psychic. He could then peer into his crystal ball and show you exactly what you did to “cause” this condition.

And better still, this would be the time you wish for the ability to time travel. That way, you can go back in time to just **before** that moment and avoid this whole terrible nightmare.

The sad truth is, your doctor – or any other medical expert – really knows what causes fibromyalgia. It’s not like developing chicken pox. You can tell a person you came down with a case of chicken pox because you obviously were around someone with that specific virus.

Even though the causes are pretty much a mystery, there are some current “theories” floating through the medical establishment that at least provide some explanation. One of the theories that is popular now centers around an idea called “central sensitization.” Basically, this says that those individuals with fibromyalgia possess a lower threshold for pain. This occurs, so the theory continues, because of an increased sensitivity in the brain to pain signals.

“If that’s the case, doctor,” I can hear you say, “how come I’m just developing it now? Why not a year ago, even five years ago?”

Your doctor would explain that repeated nerve stimulation is the actual cause of this sensitivity. After a certain amount of repetition of this stimulation, your system alters.

One of the way it changes involves an abnormally large amount of chemicals in the brain that perform the signaling of pain (these are called neurotransmitters) to be released.

But that's not all. In addition to that, the brain's neurons – which are the points that actually receive the pain signals from the neurotransmitters – appear to develop “a memory” of the pain. This causes them to become more sensitive. This, in turn, means they “overreact” to the pain signals.

This explains why pressure on a spot that wouldn't necessarily bother another person, is very painful to the individual with fibromyalgia.

But we're still left with the million dollar question: What exactly initiates this process of central sensitization?

Medical experts aren't sure.

It's quite likely, though, that several factors contribute to the actual development of the chronic, painful disorder. I've listed some other popular theories that researchers are examining:

**Sleep disturbances.** This seems to be a common thread among individuals with fibromyalgia. Some researchers think that this is more than just a coincidence. They theorize that the disturbed sleep patterns associated with this disease may be more than just an aggravating symptom. The interrupted sleep patterns may, indeed, be the cause of the disease. More research needs to be done on this theory.

**Injury.** Some medical experts claim that fibromyalgia is due to an injury or perhaps a trauma sustained to the upper spinal region. If the injury were severe enough, this theory contends, then it could damage your central nervous system, which could very possible trigger the disorder.

**Dysfunction of the autonomic nervous system.** This is the part of your nervous system which is also called the sympathetic or involuntary system. The areas included in this are the bodily functions that you don't **consciously control**, like your heart rate, sweating, intestinal movements, even your salivary flow. Some researchers believe that abnormalities occur in this area – curiously, especially at night! – which then naturally leads to the fatigue, stiffness and other symptoms that people with this disorder complain of.

**Shifts in the metabolism of muscle.** This is an interesting theory. Those who espouse this believe that fibromyalgia is actually what they call a “deconditioning” of your muscles, accompanied by a decrease in blood flow to them. This displays itself through fatigue and an observable lessening in muscle strength. The differences in metabolism as well as accompanying changes in the hormonal substances which actually influence the activity of nerves may also play a role in the development of this disease.

**Infection.** There are some medical experts who are examining the possibility that fibromyalgia may be nothing more than a viral or bacterial infection. This theory is still being researched.

### **Doctor, am I at risk?**

Everything about trying to pinpoint fibromyalgia is a little “fuzzy”. If doctors aren't sure what causes it, then it's difficult to say with any confidence who exactly is at risk for developing it. There are a few risk factors that the medical establishment has been able to delineate. They include:

**Your sex.** As I state earlier, if you're a woman, you're more likely to develop this disorder than a man.

**Your age.** Curiously, fibromyalgia develops more prevalent in individuals who are in their early to middle adulthood years. That being said, it has also been diagnosed in children as well as older adults.

**Your family history.** Believe it or not, you're more at risk for developing this disease if someone else in your family already has it.

**Presence of rheumatic disease.** If you already suffer with a rheumatic disease – for example, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus or even ankylosing spondylitis – you are more at risk to also develop fibromyalgia than the average person.

**Your sleep patterns.** We once again come back to disturbed sleep patterns. Whether these irregular sleep patterns are actually the cause of fibromyalgia or just a symptom is really not known. What is known, though, is that they put you at a greater risk for developing the disease than a person who sleeps soundly with no issues at night. In a way it's a question of which came first, the chicken or the egg. Physicians are trying to decode this riddle as well: Which came first poor sleep, problems like restless leg syndrome, or fibromyalgia.

With all the mystery that surrounds the symptoms and possible causes of fibromyalgia, you may be hesitant to see your doctor if you're having problems. You may even have heard of horror stories of individuals who have trudged from one physician to another, from one specialist to the next, only to be told that the pain they live with day after day is all in their head.

Certainly, this would dissuade even the bravest of us from venturing forth and complaining – even if we were on our deathbed!

But, that is not how you should look at it (I know, easy for me to say). Don't hesitate to visit your doctor if you experience any type of widespread pain throughout your body or a general aching that seems to consume you. Keep in mind that many of the symptoms,

mimic those of other diseases (Check out Chapter 3 to see exactly what I mean). Some of the symptoms associated with fibromyalgia, in fact, are also identified with rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis and even lupus, to name just a few.

The trips to the doctors are worth the time, trouble and energy, if you can find a physician who'll help you take care and treat your pain.

## Chapter 2: Diagnosing Fibromyalgia: What Doctors Can Do

Excruciatingly frustrating.

That's probably the best way to describe what an individual goes through in the process of attempting to get her fibromyalgia diagnosed. And, to be fair, it probably is no less discouraging for the physician who is trying to treat the individual.

You'll recall the long list of symptoms associated with this disease. Then it's understandable to realize that there is no one single test that a doctor can perform to definitively diagnose fibromyalgia. That means the doctor needs to take his patient through a series of tests to discover ***what you don't have.***

That's right! Diagnosing fibromyalgia is more a process of elimination than a pronouncement of what you really have. More often than not, the diagnosis of fibromyalgia it's a very long and drawn out process. And, to make matters worse, it's not the most accurate method of identifying an illness.

The first step your doctor takes in attempting to diagnose your disorder, is to take a history of your symptoms. In this, he'll follow the guidelines of the American College of Rheumatology. According to this organization, the diagnosis of fibromyalgia can be made only if you have experienced widespread pain for a minimum of three months. This group also recognized the diagnosis of fibromyalgia if you have at least 11 separate areas of your body that are tender to the touch.

These tender points, additionally, have very specific locations that they need to appear on your body before the College of Rheumatology will allow your doctor to consider your health condition fibromyalgia. They're located either on the left or right side of these areas:

- the neck, above your collar bone
- the back of the neck, below the hairline
- the chest, below your collar bone
- upper back, in the area where the neck and shoulder join
- spine in the upper back between the shoulder blades

Additionally, these are several other areas where, according to the College, these tender points may exist:

- insides of your arms, in the bend of the elbow
- lower back, either side, right below the waist
- buttocks, either side, below the hip bone
- knee caps, either side

Some doctors, though, find these criteria too strict and confining. They truly sympathize with individuals struggling with the quest to discover what's wrong with their bodies. Some physicians realize that an individual may still have fibromyalgia even though she only has ten of the 11 tender points. These physicians point out that the number of 11 tender points is, in reality, an arbitrary number set by the College of Rheumatology.

There are, though, several other factors your doctor may use in establishing evidence of this chronic condition. Your doctor is able to review your **long-term symptoms**. And those which may indicate fibromyalgia include:

- Stiffness upon rising in the morning
- Fatigue
- Trouble sleeping
- Numbness or a tingling sensation in the hands and the feet
- Headache

Detecting this health problem is compounded by the fact that it isn't progressive. By that I mean that the pain associated with fibromyalgia doesn't get worse the longer you have it. Moreover, the presence of this problem doesn't lead to other more complicated health problems.

But, there is one condition that this disorder does seem to spark in nearly everyone. That's depression. And this is understandable. As you'll recall, a person with fibromyalgia very often also experiences sleep disturbances. This only compounds the problems with depression.

But the very crux of this health condition is the very real problems it creates all too often in your daily lives. And fibromyalgia can play havoc with personal relationships. If you have been plagued by symptoms which you believe could be fibromyalgia, check over these risk factors carefully. How many of these apply to you?

The medical community is currently unsure if the sleep disturbances that go along with this disease are really a part of the cause of the disorder itself, or if they occur as a result of the disease. It makes little difference if you're the one plagued with the sleep problems, though. Part of the problem with falling asleep and staying asleep is that many report they awake due to night-time muscle spasms of the legs. Others say they suffer from restless leg syndrome. And some who suffer with this disorder also complain of sleep apnea.

### **Laboratory tests to detect fibromyalgia**

While it's true there's no definitive test that states unequivocally that you have fibromyalgia, there are some laboratory tests your physician can recommend. These tests are useful in that they help to diagnose other conditions with symptoms that are close to this muscle-weakening health condition. And these are tests that can identify conditions that may co-exist with your fibromyalgia. Some of these include -- but by no means are limited to -- rheumatoid arthritis, Sjogren's syndrome, thyroid disease and

lupus. For the most part though it's not cost effective or deemed necessary by all medical experts.

Here are some general tests that your health care practitioner may recommend:

**Comprehensive Metabolic Panel.** This is usually referred to by its initials, CMP. This test examines electrolytes, proteins, as well as calcium and glucose levels. It'll also measure your liver and kidney functions.

**Complete Blood Count.** This test, known as CBC evaluates your blood cells for the existence of Fibromyalgia.

**Thyroid Stimulating Hormone.** Hypothyroidism, which is what this tests for, can cause symptoms similar to fibromyalgia.

Your doctor may recommend other tests depending on what symptoms you're complaining about. But more often than not, any abnormal results you receive back from these tests will more than likely indicate underlying coexisting disorders that are not related to fibromyalgia. But before you feel too disappointed about that, think about this: at least those specific symptoms are treatable.

## Chapter 3: Conventional Treatment

How do you treat something that you don't know what caused and specialists can't even agree you have?

Another "fuzzy" question.

The symptoms of fibromyalgia are so disparate from individual to individual and even for one person from hour to hour, that treatment of the problem varies. Conventional medicine tailors a treatment to suit individual complaints.

But more than that, medical doctors also encourage sufferers of this disease to learn some basic self-care measures. Together, they say, this combination can at least hold the pain at bay for a while.

If you suffer with fibromyalgia, your doctor will more than likely prescribe several types of prescription medications to help alleviate your host of symptoms. He'll also give you something to help improve your sleep.

Some of the more common drugs include:

**Analgesics.** In simple terms: pain killers. The specific drugs your doctor recommends in this case may or may not be prescription. In some cases, over-the-counter medication, such as acetaminophen – like Tylenol – may do a fine job at not only easing the pain associated with fibromyalgia, but also relieving some of the stiffness of the disease.

If the pain is severe enough, your physician may prescribe you a drug called Tramadol (Ultram). This pain reliever can be taken while you're also taking acetaminophen.

Your physician may also consider you a candidate for nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, commonly referred to as NSAIDs. These include aspirin, ibuprofen (sold as Advil or Motrin), or naproxen sodium (which can be bought under the brand names of Anaprox and Aleve). Most physicians use these in conjunction with other medications. NSAIDs haven't proven to be an effective treatment in the management of pain due to fibromyalgia when taken alone.

### **Antidepressants.**

Your doctor may suggest you take such antidepressant medication as amitriptyline, nortriptyline or doxepin not because he believes you're depressed though... These specific drugs will help you sleep. Physicians have found that patients who use Fluoxetine – sold as Prozac – in combination with amitriptyline also experience relieve.

However, it's very possible that depression is plaguing you. While depression actually isn't a symptom of fibromyalgia, for many people it's very often a co-existing health problem. Having to deal with unspecified, generalize pain, as well as the fatigue of this disorder, can spark depression in even the most stoic of individuals. In this instance, your doctor may decide to prescribe Sertraline – sold as Zoloft – and paroxetine – known as Paxil – to help lift you out of the depression.

Recently, evidence has been mounting that proves the effectiveness of a newer class of antidepressants. These are called serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors. You might also hear them referred to as dual uptake inhibitors. These drugs regulate the two brain chemicals that science believes transmit pain signals.

Studies, in fact, have found that duloxetine –Cymbalta—help control pain more effectively than a placebo in individuals suffering with fibromyalgia. Venlafaxine (Effexor) also seems to help, although only very small trials have been conducted on this drug. Research is continuing to confirm these initial findings.

**Pregabalin (Lyrica).** This medication is the first to be approved by the Food and Drug Administration specifically for the treatment of fibromyalgia. This medication has been known to reduce the pain associated with fibromyalgia as well as improve an individual's ability to function on a daily basis. While it's technically an anti-seizure medication, Pregabalin is also used to treat some kinds of pain. Clinical studies demonstrate that this medication reduced the symptoms of fibromyalgia for some individuals. In fact, one particular trial showed that nearly half of those taking the highest doses of Pregabalin reported a **minimum of a 30 percent improvement** in their symptoms. However, this relieve does come with a price tag. Adverse side effects may include dizziness, sleepiness, swelling in the hands and feet as well as blurred vision, weight gain, dry mouth and difficulty in concentrating.

**Muscle relaxants.** Those with fibromyalgia often complain of muscle pain and spasms. Your doctor may prescribe a muscle relaxant such as cyclobenzaprine – Flexeril – for you with instructions to take it right before you go to bed. This may help you sleep. Muscle relaxants, however, are typically only used for a limited time.

### **What doctors don't want to prescribe – and why**

You may think that with the prevailing sleeping problems associated with fibromyalgia that your doctor would be quick to prescribe sleeping pills, like Ambien. Physicians however, try hard to avoid doing this. While sleep medication may, indeed, provide you with some short-term relief, many physicians caution against long-term use of these drugs.

If sleeping pills are used for too long a period, then your body may become resistant to their effects. Sleeping pills, many in the medical profession agree, pose more sleeping problems than they solve over a long period of time.

Another drug which doctors avoid prescribing if at all possible is benzodiazepine. Here again, this medication helps to relax muscles and promote sleep, but its use can also become habit forming. Besides that, long term use of benzodiazepine has yet to prove it provides any substantial long term benefits.

Physicians also try hard **not** to prescribe narcotics for the pain of fibromyalgia. They realize that this type of drug has a great potential for dependence and addiction. And corticosteroids, such as prednisone, haven't proven to be very effective in the treatment of fibromyalgia, either.

### **Cognitive Behavior Therapy: What in the world is that?**

Sounds pretty impressive, doesn't it? Even if you don't know what it means, it's just has to help your fibromyalgia. In all truthfulness this approach does seem to work for many individuals.

And while its name may sound intimidating, this form – rather forms – of therapy is quite inviting. Cognitive behavior therapy is a generalized term for a group of similar treatments. These treatments use our thoughts and behaviors to help relieve the individual suffering with a problem of the symptoms. Having said this, don't automatically jump to the conclusion that your physician **still believes** your fibromyalgia is all in your head.

Rather, he's using the immense power of your mind to help battle a very real and very physical problem. In fact, according to the National Association of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapists, this form of treatment is the quickest way many times to gain positive results – for a number of disorders.

A variety of treatments are often “packaged” together to fit an individual's distinct set of symptoms. Sometimes, the pain can be treated with psychological measures such as relaxation training or imagery exercise.

Guided imagery, if you're not familiar with it, is used to help a person with fibromyalgia relax. This actually aids in the healing of the body. While it may sound a bit unconventional, it's now part of mainstream medical practice. This technique, in particular, has been used in hundreds – if not more – of hospitals with outstanding results. Many pain clinics also use this method.

You may even wish to try it out on your own, since this therapy doesn't contain any adverse side effects. You can find plenty of books, audio tapes and CDs to teach you this method and provide proper direction.

Many with fibromyalgia report that both anxiety and stress can play a negative role in the severity of their pain. But here again, medical experts don't know where one symptom begins and the problem ends. Some researchers suggest that the pain flare-ups themselves can actually increase a person's stress load. Others say that stress posed by outside influences can trigger a painful flare up.

Here again, though, relaxation and guided imagery can help alleviate this regardless of whether the anxiety and stress caused the problem or the pain caused the stress.

In fact, Dr. Andrew Weil, perhaps the permanent physician in regards to the topic of "wellness", explains that guided imagery tapes are extremely useful in reducing pain as well as speeding the healing process.

### **A prescription for healing: A doctor who listens?**

This may sound a bit odd for a conventional approach to treatment, but it's effective nonetheless. Those who suffer with fibromyalgia actually need a physician who listens to their stories about how challenging living with the condition can be. Research now shows that just knowing that you're "heard and understood", especially by your doctor or therapist is one of the most essential components to effective treatment.

This, though, only makes sense. After all, a successful, beneficial treatment is always the result of a partnership between the patient and the doctor. A physician who listens is performing at least part of his duties as a partner.

And most recently, a study showed that even something as simple and relaxing as a massage, can help relieve not only the pain associated with fibromyalgia, but also the anxiety and stress as well.

Fatigue plays an overwhelming part in making the life of a person with fibromyalgia miserable. To help combat this symptom, the Mayo Clinic has instituted a multidisciplinary approach. The physicians here use an intensive one and a half day schedule which seems to improve the symptoms in a full 70 percent of fibromyalgia patients. This program includes psychotherapy.

The multidisciplinary approach seems to work better than a prescription-based approach. A recent scientific study compared the effectiveness of standard treatment only as opposed to standard treatment couple with cognitive therapy. The results? The combination of the standard and cognitive therapy won hands down. According to the researchers, a whopping 73 percent of the individuals who received both cognitive and standard treatment spent less time in bed and were functionally normally at the end of the year.

Of the group receiving only the standard treatment, only 27 percent could claim this type of progress.

## Chapter 4: Natural Treatments

Cayenne. Valerian root. St. John's Wort.

No, this isn't the beginning of some exotic recipe. It's actually three herbs that may be helpful in alleviating some of your symptoms of fibromyalgia.

Herbs have been used for literally thousands of years by all cultures to help heal an assortment of medical ills. Many of today's most effective and potent prescription drugs, in fact, reach back to herbal roots (no pun intended).

Just consider aspirin for a moment – one of the oldest and most trusted over-the-counter remedies we have. We would not be using aspirin today if it were not for the willow bark. That's right. The development of aspirin comes directly from the active ingredient of the white willow bark which has active ingredient that acts as an analgesic or pain killer.

Even many of our prescription drugs for heart disease also stems from natural herbs. Digitalis, for example, comes from the plant foxglove.

If you were to consider taking herbal remedies for any disorder, you'd have to consider fibromyalgia your prime candidate. The sheer number of symptoms alone makes this disease extremely tricky to treat through conventional prescription drugs.

First, currently there is only one prescription drug that has been approved by the FDA for use specifically for this disorder. This lack of fibromyalgia-specific medications means that your doctor is pulling from a host of other drugs, originally intended for other disorders or diseases that may not be right the proper fit for your unique symptoms.

Secondly, the more medications you take, the greater your chances of experiencing some type of adverse drug reaction. Your doctor – out of necessity – may be

prescribing some fairly strong medications and quite a few of them. There's also the possibility of a severe adverse side effect.

Thirdly, many of these drugs you are taking may eventually have some type of dependency associated with them. Are you willing to chance a possible dependency or addiction – especially if there were some alternative, natural solutions at your fingertips?

Just because you use some herbal remedies, though, doesn't mean you need to toss all of your medications out the window and completely turn your back on conventional treatments. In fact, it's a great idea, before you start on any herbal supplementation – whether capsule, tablet or fresh herbs – that you consult with your physician to ensure that there will be no adverse interactions. When your doctor knows, furthermore, that you're adding some herbs to your self-care regime, he may want to adjust some of your prescriptions to avoid potential side effects.

And one final word about herbs. If at all possible, before you begin an herbal regime, consult with a professional herbalist. He is in the best possible position to provide you with information on what natural remedies would provide you with the maximum relief. And you can trust him to be honest with you about any potential side effects if you use the herbs with your current prescription medications.

The most common complaint of individuals suffering from fibromyalgia is the nearly ubiquitous muscle and joint pain that pervades their entire bodies. This can be maddening if not relieved. And prescription medications can only last for several hours at a stretch.

Why not investigate the use of cayenne? And yes, this is the same cayenne that is found in those deliciously hot peppers that send you through the roof! Cayenne contains capsaicin which inhibits the neurotransmitters responsible for sending your brain pain signals. This particular product – which can be found not only at health food

stores, but in your local pharmacy as well – is best used as a topical rub. Simply apply it to the areas of your body which are experiencing pain.

Some people with fibromyalgia find that valerian root can help turn those sleepless nights into a bad dream from the past. Used medicinally since the time of the ancient Greeks and Romans, this herbal remedy has been proven to be an effective sleeping aid.

One of the benefits of using this herb as an aid to a restful sleep is that it helps to eliminate many of the dangers normally associated with prescription sleeping pills. Perhaps the biggest of which is the risk of dependency. Valerian root itself has few side effects. Some individuals say that they develop headaches when they use it and some complain of gastrointestinal problems.

Some people find that Siberian ginseng has an energizing effect on their system. The herb helps to relieve the fatigue that accompanies this disorder. Herbalists caution that if you decide to supplement your diet with this, allow at least two weeks to actually notice a difference in the way you feel.

Herbalists also recommend that you take ginseng for no longer than six weeks at a time. Then discontinue its use for an entire week. At the end of the week, you can again begin to supplement with it for another six weeks.

A natural anti-inflammatory herbal remedy is devil's claw. Historically, it's been used to treat rheumatic disorders. Some herbalists suggest you take 400 mg of devil's claw root tablet daily.

Another herb that many find helps relieve the inflammation associated with fibromyalgia is turmeric. Long used as a spice in India, it's also noted for its healing qualities. This herb may also help to reduce the pain as well. Herbalists recommend that you take between 400 to 500 mg of turmeric three times daily.

Consider the natural alternative of calendula. Taken orally this remedy seems to have a beneficial affect on many of the symptoms of this disorder.

I mentioned willow bark earlier as an herb that the pharmaceutical industry adapted and from which emerged a synthetic drug. You may want to consider the herb itself as a supplement for your fibromyalgia. It contains natural anti-inflammatory properties. But more than that it also acts as an effective pain killer.

Two more excellent herbs to use as natural anti-inflammatory aids are pine bark and grape seed extract. Both of these are known to contain an abundance of antioxidants. Herbalists suggest you take 50 mg servings of these three times a day.

Another alternative to the constant use of aspirin many of those who suffer with fibromyalgia experience is ginger. This herb seems to help ease the pain especially if you use it as a tea. All you need to do is steep one teaspoon of grated ginger root in eight ounces of hot water. Let it sit for at least 10 minutes. Then strain. You may decide you want to add some honey to suit your taste.

If you don't have access to the root itself, you can find ginger supplements in just about any vitamin or health food stores. Herbal specialists suggest a serving of 1,000 mg to 2,000 mg daily. It's also best to take with food, these experts say.

## **Vitamins and other natural substances for fibromyalgia**

**Vitamin D.** Most often you think of it in connection with our milk consumption. While we all know our bodies need it, very few of us actually ever think about *why* it's essential to our health. It appears that the generalized pain of fibromyalgia is quite similar to the pain associated with a Vitamin D deficiency.

In fact, ongoing research is being conducted which examines this possibility in more depth. Some physicians have found that when the generalized aches and pains their patients complain of ***don't meet the strict criteria*** as set by the College of Rheumatology, they discover that a lack of this vitamin is sometimes the culprit.

Just listen to this study, conducted in Germany. Researchers examined 994 individuals and discovered a “strong correlation” between low levels of Vitamin D and not only higher rates of generalized joint and muscle pain, but even a longer duration of that pain.

In this country, a similar study, conducted by the Mayo Clinic, revealed similar results. This prestigious health clinic looked at 150 people who complained of persistent, non-specific musculoskeletal pain. Of these a whopping 93 percent of them were deficient in Vitamin D.

But wait, that's just the tip of the iceberg. These two studies looked at people who failed to meet the criteria for fibromyalgia. A very insightful researcher then asked, “Could vitamin D possibly help those who have been diagnosed with this disorder?”

Unfortunately, this study provided no conclusive link to the generalized pain of fibromyalgia and vitamin D deficiency. It did, curiously, provide another avenue of inquiry though. The study concluded that the anxiety and depression a person with fibromyalgia experiences in some cases related to a vitamin D deficiency.

Another nutrient that receives scant attention is that of **magnesium**. Here again, we all know that it's essential to the workings of our bodies, but few of us really understand why.

In fact, this is a very essential mineral, responsible for some 300 biochemical reactions that your body performs every day. In fact, many physicians recommend the intake of magnesium in conjunction with malic acid (this is a fruit acid found naturally in apples).

Both of these substances are needed for the generation of energy cells of adenosine triphosphate (ATP).

A study attempting to prove this practice at first found no evidence to substantiate this theory. In fact, in the initial round of study involving 97 individuals absolutely no link between these two substances and the symptoms of fibromyalgia could be found.

A double-blind study then looked at the effectiveness of 50 mg of magnesium taken three times daily combined with 200 mg of malic acid taken just as often. Though this study was small – involving only 24 people – the results were disappointing. This combination was no more effective, researchers reported, than a placebo.

However, results began looking a little different when the serving size of these supplements was increased. These same participants then received six months of supplementation. This time they were provided with larger servings – up to 300 mg of magnesium and up to 1200 mg of malic acid. Again, this serving was administered three times a day for both supplements.

The larger servings proved the point. This combination did, in fact, prompt an improvement in the pain as well as the tenderness associated with fibromyalgia.

Magnesium can be found naturally in green, leafy vegetables, in nuts, seeds and whole grains.

You probably don't want to just start adding magnesium supplements in large quantities to your diet without consulting your physician first. This mineral is not total free of possible adverse side effects. Too much of this mineral may cause diarrhea, nausea, loss of appetite as well as muscle weakness and difficulty in breathing. It can also interact with some medications, especially those used for osteoporosis, high blood pressure and some antibiotics, muscle relaxants and diuretics.

Here's a vitamin that you're probably more familiar with. It's B12. One Swedish study showed that lower levels of B12 existed in the cerebrospinal fluid individuals with fibromyalgia than in those without the symptoms. This is the clear fluid that literally bathes the entire surface of your central nervous system. This fluid is responsible for many activities, but two of its major functions include protecting the brain from impacts and creating a buoyancy to keep pressure at the base of the brain to a minimum.

The study took 12 women who met the criteria not only for fibromyalgia, but also chronic fatigue syndrome. They also had a group of 18 women who had neither of the two disorders.

The researchers discovered that the levels of homocysteine in the cerebrospinal fluid were more than three times higher in the women who suffered with the fibromyalgia and the chronic fatigue syndrome than the control group. Not only was the content of the fluid different for those with this disorder, but the level of the fluid itself also differed. The level of the fluid containing the B12 was low in seven out of 12 individuals who had been diagnosed with fibromyalgia.

Have you ever heard of **SAMe**? It's gained some notoriety lately as a supplement that appears to help boost memory. A compound that occurs naturally in the body, it's also essential for the proper functioning of your immune system as well as maintenance of cell membranes. SAMe, which is also known by the lengthy name of S-adenosylmethionine, also plays an important role in the production and the breakdown of neurotransmitters like serotonin, norepinephrine and dopamine. SAMe is also an important component in the formation of cartilage and in the creation of genetic material.

And now several preliminary studies indicate that SAMe may be able to aid those with fibromyalgia. A small double-blind study examined the effects of SAMe on 17 people with fibromyalgia. Eleven of these individual also suffered from depression. Specifically, the test found that after taking supplementation with SAMe, the number of tender points decreased.

Interestingly enough, the incidence of depression in these individuals also decreased.

Another double-blind study, this one involving 44 individuals with fibromyalgia – involved 800 mg of SAME. Half of this group took this serving size of the supplement once a day. The other half of the group took a placebo. After six weeks, those who were taking the SAME were found to experience significant improvements in the level of pain, fatigue, morning stiffness and mood.

Here's something you can do to help alleviate the pain of the disorder. **Exercise.** Now before you start complaining that you couldn't possibly do anything with the pain the way it is, think again. First, let me explain that when I say exercise I don't mean running marathons or training for any Olympic sport. I'm talking about a short walk that could eventually be pumped up into longer excursions (with plenty of time).

Consider, too, what even a little exercise could do for your body. It could help relieve that morning stiffness you're suffering with as well as help alleviate some of the joint pain. And exercising during the day can help you expend more energy and provide you with the possibility of sleeping a little better at night.

An article in the professional journal ***Current Opinion in Rheumatology*** confirms these statements. Those who exercise regularly appear to experience less severe symptoms than those who are sedentary.

If you can't see yourself beginning a walking program right away, then consider yoga. This activity is gentle on your muscles and bones, yet provides the stretching actions that can help with that stiffness. As an added benefit, yoga focuses on your breathing action which helps to provide a level of relaxation.

# **The 5 Step Plan to Healing Fibromyalgia**

## **Step 1: Miracle Mineral Supplement (MMS)**

When most people hear the word "miracle", alarm bells go off and they run the other way... However when it comes to Fibromyalgia we believe that this one supplement is the most effective treatment we've ever seen... AND... the best thing is that it's also the cheapest we have ever come across!!

In fact, a lot of sufferers who have started this plan have been a bit lazy. You see they have just done this ONE step, and they completely healed their Fibromyalgia using MMS only... Not even doing the other steps.

MMS is available from several websites for around \$25 a bottle (this lasts a year).

You can get it cheaper from ebay, but we highly recommend not to get from there as the MMS they are selling on ebay is of poor quality, and you will only save a few dollars.

I get my MMS from a really reliable site who sell high quality MMS, best of all... I know it works, here's the site below:

[www.mmszone.org](http://www.mmszone.org)

The bottle you will buy will last you about a year – and only costs \$25!! (bargain!).

It is so cheap because it is not a commercial supplement – it is a natural mineral – these guys just bottle it and sell it – therefore it is dirt cheap.

Anyway here is the protocol that we use:

1. All protocols for taking MMS start with one or two drops. Never start with more than one or two drops. People who are very sick and/or sensitive should start with ½ drop. Add Lemon/Lime Juice – 5 Drops for every 1 drop of MMS. Then leave it sit for 3 minutes (no less).

Then add 2/3 glass of water and drink it down.

2. If you do well and do not notice nausea on the first dose, you can increase by one drop for the second dose. If you notice nausea reduce the amount of MMS for the next dose. You can do two doses a day, one in the morning and one in the evening. Continue to increase by one drop each time you take a new dose.

3. Work your way up to 3 x 6 Drops per day. This should be sufficient to kill the pathogens.

**Note:** If you notice diarrhea, or even vomiting that is not necessarily a bad sign. The

body is simply throwing off toxins and cleaning itself out. Some people say they feel much better after having diarrhea. You do not have to take any medicine for it as it will go away as fast as it came. It will not last. It is not caused by a bacteria or virus. When the "poison" is gone, the diarrhea is gone.

**Note:** Base your diet on good nutrition. Your body will then be able to easily absorb vitamins and minerals and many other nutrients it might have been missing up to this time. You should feel better as time goes by.

For more in-depth info you can get a free ebook from [www.miraclemineal.org](http://www.miraclemineal.org)

## **Step 2 - Alkalizing**

### **Apple Cider vinegar and Bi-Carb Soda (Baking Soda).**

Apple Cider Vinegar (ACV) is a well known remedy has been used for years for many ailments from Acid Reflux to Menopause. The reason it is so widely used is that it purifies the blood like nothing else on earth.

Bi-Carb Soda (Baking Soda) is better known by most people for it's household cleaning properties. But I can assure you, this little household product will have you feeling fine. Why? Bi-Carb is a natural Alkalizing agent. It alkalizes the body and forms an environment in which harmful bacteria and microforms find it impossible to survive.

- Take one coffee mug.
- ½ teaspoon of Baking Soda (Bi-Carb Soda)
- 2 Tablespoons of Organic Apple Cider Vinegar (ACV). You must make sure that this ACV is Organic with the Mother apple. The most common brand is Braggs. Do not use the everyday ACV from the Supermarket... It must be organic.
- Add warm (not boiling) water.
- Drink it up. It may burn a little, but you will learn to enjoy this warm soothing drink.
- Drink this 3 times a day.

### **Hydrogen Peroxide**

You will also need to drink 6 drops of hydrogen peroxide 3% (from pharmacy) in a full glass of water once a day.

## **Step 3**

### **Oil Pulling (or Oil Swishing)**

Oil pulling is an ancient Ayurvedic practice which involves putting Cold Pressed Sesame Oil or Sunflower Oil into your mouth and swishing, chomping it around your mouth for 10-15 minutes.

What does this do?

It literally pulls toxins and mucous from multiple areas of the body. This will reduce fatigue, and increase your energy greatly.

### **Instructions**

- 1) Do this first thing in the morning before you brush your teeth or eat or drink.
- 2) Take 1 Tablespoon of Cold Pressed Sesame Oil or Sunflower Oil.
- 3) Put the oil in your mouth.
- 4) Swish it through your mouth thoroughly, suck it through your teeth and wash it around your mouth for 10 to 15 minutes. For maximum effect, do it for 15-20 minutes.
  - WHEN YOU FINISHED, THE OIL SHOULD BE WHITE AND FOAMY. That's how you know you've done it right, if not you need to suck the saliva from the insides of your cheeks while you are swishing.
  - DO NOT GARGLE IN YOUR THROAT
  - DO NOT SWALLOW THE OIL (IT NOW CONTAINS PARASITES)
- 5) Once you spit the water out, rinse your mouth out with water and follow with 2-3 glasses of purified, filtered water.

Do this for at least a couple of weeks, you will be surprised at how good you will feel, out of all the remedies that I recommend and personally use, this one is by far the most profound. I have seen this cure 15 year arthritis, sinusitis and many other chronic diseases.

If you do want to use this method for a more serious condition, then step it up and do the process above 3 times a day, TRY TO DO IT ON AN EMPTY STOMACH.

## **Step 4 – Nutrition and Physical Activity**

### **Nutrition**

- 1) Eliminate white bread and white flour – Why? Most of it is brominated (the flour is bleached using the bromine technique), you could get a healthy alternative at your local health food store.
- 2) Eliminate fluoride and chlorine products such as toothpaste, mouth wash and some tap water you can get fluoride-free alternatives – I brush my teeth with baking soda.
- 3) Drink enough clean filtered water – approximately 2.5 – 3.5 Liters a day.
- 4) Don't use artificial sweetener (aspartame), it is found in most "diet" products, like diet coke, diet deserts etc...
- 5) Start eating more green leafy vegetables with every meal.
- 6) Take a Men's or Women's Multi-Vitamin supplement from the health food store.

### **Physical Activity**

#### **Fibromyalgia and Exercise**

Now I know this isn't everyone's favorite subject in the world, in fact, most people dread the idea of strapping on the joggers, suiting up and heading for the local gym.

Look, no matter how much you hate exercise, it is an absolute necessity when it comes to Fibromyalgia.

Why? Well there are three reasons why you need to exercise during Fibromyalgia....

#### **1) Energy**

By exercising everyday or even 3-5 times a week your energy will explode, on the first day or two you may feel a little tired, but just hang in there for two weeks and I guarantee your energy will go through the roof.

## **2) Emotional Support**

It is a well-known fact that exercise acts as a release for stress and other bad emotions. I can guarantee that if you were to force a person who suffered from depression to go out for a jog in the park at least once a day for ½ an hour, they would no longer suffer from depression.

Bold statement. I know. But trust me, at least go for a solid, sweaty 30-minute walk and feel the difference in your mood afterwards.

## **3) Blood flow**

Exercise also increases blood flow and oxygen, which helps the body absorb Vitamins and minerals more effectively.

## **4) Bone Strength**

Exercise strengthens your bones and ensures that calcium intake is absorbed into the bones, reducing the risk of osteoporosis and strengthening the bones in the long run.

## **Types of Exercise**

There are two types of exercises and I have a few recommendations that you can implement to get this exercise into your daily schedule as painlessly as possible.

### **Aerobic Exercise**

This should be the cornerstone of your exercise program. Aerobic exercise is light to moderate activities that involve the use of large muscle groups and the respiratory system.

I find the best form of aerobic exercise for menopausal women is a brisk walk. This leads to recommendation number one:

**Walk every second day for 30 minutes at a medium pace, try to get a sweat going.** If you can't get a sweat going, you ain't walking fast enough!

### **Strength/Resistance Training**

This kind of training will seem pointless to some women, but you must realize that strength/weight training has been proven to increase bone density and decrease your risk of developing osteoporosis. So if you want to remain mobile into your old age, I strongly recommend you follow this plan:

**Get some medium weight dumbbells or go to the local gym and lift weights until you are fatigued, once a week.**

### **Step 5 – Iodine Painting of Heels**

You will need to get some iodine from the supermarket or drug store. If you can get the colorless kind – get that, as the normal one actually stains.

If you get the normal one just make sure you apply it in the bathroom on some paper towel.

You will apply this for 3 days a week until your Fibro is gone.

You will painting the iodine on using a cotton ball and applying it to the balls of your feet (heel). Try not to get it on your fingers as it is hard to get off.

Don't worry about walking with the iodine on your feet as it will dry literally in seconds.

## **Emotional (Stress Management)**

One of the worse symptoms of anemia is stress and bad moods. In fact depending on how you manage these symptoms, your other menopausal symptoms can get worse or better.

In this chapter I will discuss exactly what I did to eliminate every ounce of stress, anger and depression from my life.

Anthony Robbins, the world renowned success coach, has always said: “The quality of your life is determined by the emotions you experience consistently on a day to day basis.”

Using one of Tony’s technologies I will teach you how to change these emotions.

The way we feel at any point in time is determined by **three factors**:

- 1) Physiology – The way you move your body (Smile, Slouching, Standing).
- 2) Focus – What you focus on.
- 3) Language/Meaning – The language you use or Meaning you attach to an event.

If I change any of these I change the intensity and sometimes the actual emotion.

### **Example:**

I was sitting at my desk at work one day and I had a deadline for an important report that I just could not complete. A million things were going through my head, and basically I was stressed out of my mind and I could only imagine what damage I was doing to my body. If I break up my actions at that point in time they would look like this:

- 1) Physiology – Slouched over in my chair, my breathing was shallow, my face was drab and down, my head was facing down and was in my hands.

2) Focus – I was focusing on how there was no way I was going to finish that report. I was also focusing on what my boss would think or do if I didn't get it finished.

3) Language/Meaning – My internal dialog sounded like: “There's no way I'm gonna finish this thing” and “I can't believe I said I could do this report”.

Now, because I knew this strategy I was only in this state for about two minutes. What did I do to get out of it? Well that's simple, I just changed the three things above in the right order 1-2-3.

1) Physiology – I jumped out my chair, shook my body out, and actually started to breath properly.

2) Focus – I then started to focus how far I had come in my job and that I would have loved to have this report to do a few months ago. So I decided to see this as a great problem.

3) Language/Meaning – I started to tell myself, “This is a great opportunity to grow”.

Just by changing these three factors I went from being stressed to being determined and grateful for the opportunity that lay before me, and guess what, the report got done and it got done well!!! Because I had a healthy, clear mind I was able to think more rapidly. Also more importantly I did not experience any ACID emotions at all!

Please put this method into use and you will notice a huge increase in the quality of your life, I also recommend further checking out any of Anthony Robbins audio programs or books.

## NOTES