

Fibromyalgia Demystified

Bodywork as a Key Therapy

Cathy Ulrich

Jane had just been diagnosed with fibromyalgia. She was happy to have a name for the mysterious, traveling pain she had felt for some time, but she was still worried about how to deal with it. She'd done research on the Internet, but the information left her more confused. "There are so many causes and ways to treat it," she said. "I don't know what to do." A friend of Jane's recommended massage as part of her treatment plan. "She said it helped her," Jane said, "so I'm willing to try."

For fibromyalgia sufferers, muscle pain, tightness, and general body discomfort can all too often become a way of life. But what is fibromyalgia, and what can be done to help?

Theories about the cause of fibromyalgia include thyroid imbalance, sleep disorders, genetic predisposition, allergies, trauma--especially whiplash injuries--and possibly even viruses. Many who have fibromyalgia syndrome have other conditions as well, including depression, irritable bowel syndrome, chemical sensitivities, intolerance to exercise, restless legs syndrome, extreme sensitivity to cold, and seasonal affective disorder.

Factors At Play

Jay Goldstein, MD, a leading researcher and clinician, identified three common factors in people who are susceptible to fibromyalgia. It's helpful to consider



Bodywork can ease the pain of fibromyalgia, helping people improve their quality of life.

What is Fibromyalgia?

Fibromyalgia, which literally means "connective tissue muscle pain," causes severe tenderness in multiple points throughout the body as well as persistent fatigue, morning stiffness, and non-refreshing sleep. Fibromyalgia is found in about 2 percent of the adult population, and women are five to seven times more likely to have it than men.

these factors when planning a treatment approach:

1. Biochemical factors, such as hormonal disturbances, allergies, frequent colds and viruses, and nutritional deficiencies.
2. Biomechanical factors, such as

Continued on page 2

Relax! Life is Beautiful!

-David L. Wolper

Office Hours and Contact

Ohana Therapeutic Massage
218-263-1501
Summer Hours!
Mon. thru Thurs. 9am-6:30pm
Friday 9am-2pm
Saturdays - CLOSED

In this Issue

Fibromyalgia Demystified
Steer Clear of the Gym
Salt Story

Continued from page 1

congenital deformities (one leg longer than the other or scoliosis, curvature of the spine) or functional conditions (poor posture, overuse syndromes, or poor breathing patterns).

3. Psychosocial factors, like depression, anxiety, or difficulty coping with stress.

Bodywork Can Help

Fibromyalgia is best treated using a multidisciplinary approach, and bodywork can be a key part of healing, recovery, and management. Depending on your specific needs, any or all of the following methods may be helpful.

Swedish Massage

Because stress is such a strong component of fibromyalgia, regular massages for relaxation and stress reduction can be beneficial to your program. Swedish massage is the foundation of training for most massage therapists. Its primary goals are to gently relieve muscle tension, improve circulation, and restore the balance between mind and body.

Rolfing

This whole-body approach is designed to restore postural alignment and ease. Rolfing--and other related forms of bodywork under the umbrella of structural integration--helps to free soft tissue tightness and remove the structural imbalances that create stresses and strains on the body, restoring biomechanical function. Whiplash and other types of neck injuries are commonly seen in fibromyalgia cases. Rolfing aligns the body so the head and neck can rest more easily.

Lymphatic Massage

The lymph system is the body's primary way of eliminating waste at the cellular level. When the lymph system is backed up, tissues can get bogged down and become irritated, inflamed, and swollen. Biochemical disturbances are a key factor in fibromyalgia, so restoring the mechanical function of the lymph system can be important. Lymphatic massage is a specific form of therapy designed to improve circulation, remove waste, and reduce swelling in the tissues. It's often a good way to start a bodywork session.

Neuromuscular Therapy

Trigger points--pivotal body points that

hold and release pressure--become small areas of extreme tenderness and tightness for fibromyalgia patients. Neuromuscular therapy is a specific form of bodywork designed to free these trigger points along with the fiber in the surrounding tissues. Neuromuscular therapy encompasses many different techniques, but the system is designed to relieve the tightness in the deep soft tissues and to eliminate trigger points.

Considerations

Sensitivity to touch varies greatly for fibromyalgia patients. Some people prefer very deep work, while others are sensitive to the lightest pressure. It's important that you establish good communications with your massage therapist so you can explain what feels comfortable to you and what doesn't.

When you're in an acute flare-up, limit your bodywork to more gentle

techniques. When you're feeling better, deeper work intended to eliminate trigger points or work on posture may be more appropriate. Partner with your therapist to find the best approach.

You may be sore after a session. A moderate level of soreness can be expected, but should only last about forty-eight hours as your body adapts to the changes. If it lasts longer or is more severe, bodywork may be too aggressive or the session may be too long. Start out slowly, learn what works best for you, and let your therapist increase the time or intensity as you progress.

Fibromyalgia is a soft tissue condition, and bodyworkers are experts at working with soft tissues. By including massage in your care, you can expect to manage and improve your fibromyalgia.



Free yourself from the often debilitating discomfort of fibromyalgia and take back your life.

Steer Clear of the Gym

Take it Easy After Your Massage

Ray Bishop

When booking a massage, consider your schedule, and try to avoid any strenuous physical exertion for at least 24 hours following your bodywork session. Exercising after a session can both increase muscle soreness and compromise the value of the soft-tissue work you've just received. "Strenuous exercise" includes activities such as running, weight lifting, high intensity aerobics, or power yoga classes.

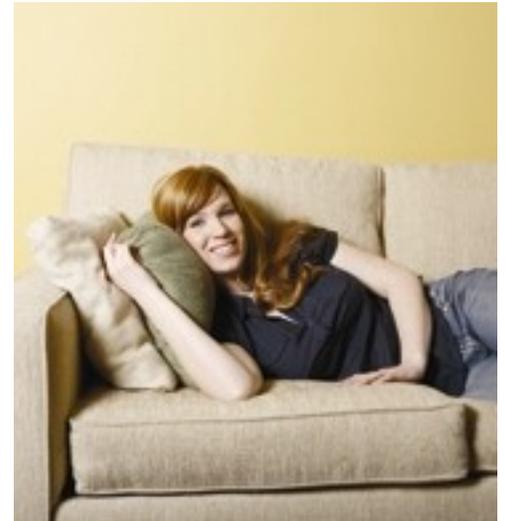
Light exercise such as moderate walking, gentle stretching, or swimming laps at an easy pace is okay for healthy individuals. One widely accepted view in favor of this twenty-four-hour recovery period is that sustained pressure on connective tissue makes it more gel-like. The technical term for this change is thixotropic effect. This state of increased softness lasts about twenty-four hours, so high-intensity exercise may pull or move the tissue back to old patterns or even induce new strain patterns.

Experts usually suggest taking it easy that evening and the following day. To further reduce any bodywork-related soreness, drink at least two liters of water in the next twenty-four hours to hydrate and flush your system. Take a hot Epsom salt bath and drink gently calming teas such as chamomile or passionflower to facilitate sleep and reduce stress that is so commonly seen as a contributing factor in chronic muscle tension and soreness. If you're dealing with an injury, the guidelines should be adjusted, but these basic suggestions seem to work well for most people.

It does appear that healthy people who exercise vigorously five to six days a week sometimes find even these modest recommendations quite challenging. If you're one of these people, consider working out before your session and then take it easy afterward.

To get the most out of your massage, hold off on the workout. When you do hit the gym again, you'll likely discover

your body is more fit than ever, thanks to the healing power of bodywork.



Take it easy and let your massage soak in.

Salt Story

Good for your skin, but limit your intake

Shelley Burns

With all we hear these days about reducing salt (sodium) in our diets, it's easy to lose sight of the fact that salt is an essential element for human life.

It's true we need to be cognizant of how much sodium we ingest in our diets. Excess salt can cause high blood pressure, heart disease, and kidney problems. These are serious conditions. A less serious, but still important, result of excess sodium is water retention. Water retention leads to puffy eyes and dry skin--two effects we don't want to encounter as we strive for healthy skin.

We usually get enough salt from our diets naturally, but we start to run into trouble when we reach for processed foods. Fast food and ready-made meals contain excessive amounts of salt. Out of habit, we may then reach for the salt

shaker to further enhance flavor. The more we salt our food, the more salt we want, creating something of an addiction. We would be better off using fresh herbs, spices, and lemon to flavor our foods.

The recommended daily intake of salt is 1,500-2,400 milligrams. Those with high blood pressure may need to reduce salt intake to less than 1,500 milligrams, or use a salt substitute.

Is there anything good to say about salt? Of course. Salt therapy, or halotherapy, has been used since the early 19th century to treat respiratory and dermatological issues. Salt therapy increases circulation to the skin, which elicits healing. As it does its magic, itching will begin to subside and small cracks will vanish from the skin. Salt also

kills bacteria and fungus and, when used externally, has anti-inflammatory properties.

So put away the salt shaker and treat yourself instead to a halotherapy experience--both steps will improve your health.

Shelley Burns, a doctor of naturopathic medicine, completed studies at the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine, and has certification in complementary and integrative medicine from Harvard University.

*Massage has had
a positive effect
on every medical
condition we've
looked at.*

-Tiffany Field

As readers of our Newsletter, we like to give you the first peeks of the happenings at Ohana Therapeutic Massage. Check out below for the latest news!

WeGiveBack July Honorees!

This month we are honoring those who help keep us at our healthiest, those who work in healthcare! From July 9th-20th, 2018, Healthcare Workers may qualify to receive a FREE 30 minute massage at Ohana Therapeutic Massage! For more details or to schedule your free 30 minute massage, please call us at 218-263-1501.

PRODUCT HIGHLIGHT

TerraShield Outdoor Blend contains powerful essential oils and other plant oils known to provide outdoor protection in a natural, safe way. Keep the bugs away without all the harsh chemicals - while supplies last!

Helping you Heal yourself

208 E Howard St
Hibbing, MN 55746



Member, Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals