

Living Well With

FIBROMYALGIA

When you have fibromyalgia, taking good care of yourself is critical. It can lower your pain, improve your sleep, help you feel less tired, and help you cope better with your symptoms. It can also help you better manage your day-to-day life.



Here are some self-care tips to help you live well with fibromyalgia.

- Make time to relax each day. Consider doing breathing exercises, meditating, listening to relaxing music, getting a massage, going out for a walk, or spending time with a pet. These may help lower the stress that can bring on symptoms. They may even lessen symptoms.
 - Stick with a regular sleep pattern. Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time each day. Try not to nap during the day. And limit how much caffeine you have. Caffeine can make it hard to sleep. If you smoke, consider quitting. Nicotine is a stimulant. So if you have sleep problems, quitting smoking may help your sleep. Getting enough sleep lets your body repair itself, physically and mentally.
 - Get regular exercise. Exercise is one of the best treatments for fibromyalgia. Not only can it keep muscles strong and flexible, but it may also boost the chemicals in the brain that help trigger a positive emotional state.
 - Pay attention to your diet. No specific foods have been linked to fibromyalgia. But some people say that their symptoms can be worse when they eat foods they are sensitive to or allergic to. It may help to keep a food journal, to keep track of any foods that make you feel worse or better. It may also help to aim for a balanced, healthy diet. This may help keep your energy up. If you'd like help making healthy food choices, you may want to talk with someone trained in nutrition services.
 - Focus on what you can do. Try to avoid dwelling on what you are not able to do. Being mindful of what you can do can help you keep a positive attitude.
 - Be flexible. You may want to make some changes to your home and workplace activities. For example, your employer or an occupational therapist may be able to help you find a less painful way to lift objects. You may be able to set up your workstation so it is more comfortable. At home, try to keep doing daily activities such as light chores or evening walks. But do not overdo it.
- Make sure to take breaks often and ask for help when you need it.
- Get support. Consider seeing a health care professional if you begin to feel overwhelmed by fibromyalgia pain. If your pain is at a level that prevents you from doing or enjoying your daily activities, talk with your health care provider. You may also find it helpful to talk with a mental health professional, such as a psychologist, who can assist you with the physical and psychological aspects of your condition.
 - Educate yourself. Learning more about your condition may help you better cope with symptoms and pain. Nationally known organizations like the Arthritis Foundation and the National Fibromyalgia Association are great sources of information.
- Ask your health care practitioner if there are any tests, referrals, or treatments that might be helpful to use along with your current treatment plan. Other treatment options may include the following: chiropractic services, physical therapy, acupuncture, nutritional services, massage therapy, medicines, and other services (such as occupational therapy).