



## FIBROMYALGIA: SUTRAS TO WIN OVER THE ACHES AND PAINS

(Received on: 24 Dec 2015, Reviewed on: 23 Jan 2016 and Accepted on: 21 Feb 2016)

**Dr. Bharat Verma**, Assist. Professor  
LNIFE, Gwalior M.P.



### Abstract

Fibromyalgia is a chronic illness that causes widespread muscle pain and stiffness in the body, easy tiredness, sleep and mood disturbances, and a host of other problems. It affects millions of people worldwide. Women between the ages of 25 and 60 years are the most likely sufferers, and outnumber men by seven to ten times. The illness is a bag of mystery; nobody quite knows what triggers it, even as modern day research suggests it's caused by a glitch in the way the body perceives pain. The X-rays and lab tests including blood tests draw a naught and do not show any abnormality, but the pain is real and interferes with work, physical activity, and daily chores.

**Keywords:** Stress, Pain, Triggers, Diet and Sleep.

### Fibromyalgia

The diagnosis of fibromyalgia rests singularly on its tell-tale symptoms and clinical bedside exam. Specific tender points in certain locations in the body are distinctive features. When these points are pressed, people with fibromyalgia feel pain, while people without the condition only feel pressure. Classically, these points of tenderness exist on both sides of the body in a symmetrical fashion.

### Causes of Fibromyalgia

There are many theories about what may be the true cause of fibromyalgia, but doctors are

still not sure of the exact culprit. Most experts think that fibromyalgia results from a combination of factors, rather than a single cause.

- Chemical or Hormonal Imbalances

Many researchers believe fibromyalgia occurs due to chemical or hormonal imbalances in the body which disrupt the way nerves signal pain. The hypothesis is that people with fibromyalgia have a low pain threshold. This possibly happens because of lower levels of a brain neurotransmitter called serotonin in the body. Serotonin has a calming, anxiety-reducing action. Low serotonin levels may lead to lowered pain thresholds and an increased sensitivity to pain.

- Chronic Stress

Many researchers think that prolonged, chronic stress coupled with poor physical conditioning, or a sudden traumatic psychological event may act to increase a person's susceptibility of developing fibromyalgia.

#### Genetic Factors

Some people may also suffer from a genetic predisposition towards fibromyalgia. The hypothesis is simple: A pool of genes may be instrumental in regulating the way the body processes the painful stimuli. People with fibromyalgia may inherit genes that cause them to react intensely to such stimuli that most people would not perceive as painful. Such genes may pass from a mother to a daughter. When people with genetic tendency are exposed to certain emotional or physical



stressors-such as a traumatic crisis or a serious – illness – their body's exaggerated response to stress results in body's higher sensitivity to develop pain and tenderness.

- Fibromyalgia Triggers

Some factors, including weather conditions, especially cold or humid weather, too much or too little physical activity, too much stress, and poor sleep or lack of sleep can worsen the symptoms of fibromyalgia.

Identifying the common triggers that makes the condition worse is an important first step to exercise a restraint on the illness. In some people, symptoms begin after a physical trauma, surgery, infection or significant psychological stress. In other people, symptoms gradually accumulate over with no single triggering event.

### **Symptoms of Fibromyalgia**

- Chronic muscle pain, muscle spasms, or tightness
- Easy tiredness and fatigue
- Insomnia
- Cognitive Difficulties
- Stress related symptoms
- Depression

### **Treatment of Fibromyalgia**

#### Seeing the Doctor

Consult a family physician, rheumatologist, physiatrist or an orthopedic surgeon. doctor may diagnose fibromyalgia after hearing symptoms and doing a physical examination. While there is no lab test to confirm a diagnosis of fibromyalgia, doctor may want to rule out other conditions that may have similar symptoms. These blood tests may include:

- Complete blood count
- Erythrocyte sedimentation rate
- Thyroid function tests

- These tests would draw a blank, but will help to rule out such major conditions as rheumatoid arthritis and limps, which require a different line of treatment.

#### Treatment Sutras

The goal of fibromyalgia treatment is to minimize pain, and alleviate sleep and mood disturbances. The emphasis is on minimizing symptoms and improving general health. No one treatment works for all symptoms. In general, treatment for fibromyalgia include both medication and self-care.

#### Medications

Medications can help reduce the pain of fibromyalgia and improve sleep. Common choices include:

- i. Pain relievers
- ii. Antidepressants
- iii. Anti-seizure drugs
- iv. Counseling Therapy
- v. Alternative Therapies

#### Meditation and Yoga

These ancient Indian practices combine meditation, slow movements, deep breathing and relaxation. Both have been found to be helpful in controlling fibromyalgia symptoms. Besides dealing with the pain and fatigue of fibromyalgia, these may also help tide over the other stress related bodily and psychological disturbances.

#### Massage Therapy

This is one of the oldest methods of health care still in practice. It involves use of different manipulative techniques to find out our body's muscles and soft tissues. Massage can reduce heart rate, relax muscles, improve range of motion in joints and increase production of body's natural painkillers. It often helps relieve stress and anxiety.



### Acupuncture

Acupuncture is a traditional Chinese medical system based on restoring normal balance of life force by inserting very fine needles through the skin at key points on the body. According to Western theories of acupuncture, the needles cause changes in blood flow and levels of neurotransmitters in the brain and spinal cord.

### **Means to overcome Fibromyalgia:**

#### 1. Reduce stress

Develop a plan to avoid or limit overexertion and emotional stress. Allow time each day to relax. That may mean learning how to say no without guilt. But try not to change routine completely.

#### 2. Get enough sleep

Since fatigue is a major complaint in fibromyalgia, getting sufficient sleep is essential. In addition to allotting enough time for sleep, practice good sleep habits, such as going to bed and getting up at the same time each day and limiting daytime napping.

#### 3. Exercise regularly

Exercise can relieve several fibromyalgia symptoms. Physical activity can reduce pain and improve fitness. Exercising just three times a week has also been shown to relieve fatigue and depression. But it's important not to overdo it. At first, exercise may increase pain. But doing it gradually and regularly often decrease symptoms.

#### 4. Eat healthy foods

Certain foods, including aspartame, MSG, caffeine, and tomatoes, seem to worsen symptoms in some people.

#### 5. Maintain a healthy lifestyle

Do something that individual find enjoyable and fulfilling every day. Many people with

fibromyalgia find that their symptoms and quality of life improve substantially as they identify the most effective treatments and make lifestyle changes. While fibromyalgia is a chronic condition, the good bit is it does not damage the joints, muscles, or internal organs.

### **References:**

- Häuser W, Eich W, Herrmann M, Nutzinger DO, Schiltenswolf M, Henningsen P "Fibromyalgia syndrome: classification, diagnosis, and treatment". *Dtsch Arztebl Int.* 106 (23): 383–91. (June 2009).
- Rodriguez-Pintó, Ignasi; Agmon-Levin, Nancy; Howard, Amital; Shoenfeld, Yehuda (1 October 2014). "Fibromyalgia and cytokines". *Immunology Letters.* 161 (2): 200–203.
- Wang, SM; Han, C; Lee, SJ; Patkar, AA; Masand, PS; Pae, CU (June 2015). "Fibromyalgia diagnosis: a review of the past, present and future." *Expert Review of Neurotherapeutics.* 15 (6): 667–79.
- Yatish Agrawal, *Dream 2047, International Magazine, Vol.-17 Issue 12, Dec 2015.*  
<https://yogainternational.com/article/view/the-art-of-surrender-yoga-fibromyalgia-revealed> on 24 June 2014.  
<http://www.healthcalculators.com> revealed on 20 Jan 2016.  
<http://www.everydayhealth.com/fitness/how-fit-are-you-a-fitness-test-for-adults.aspx> revealed on 20 April 2015.