

# FIBROMYALGIA

## DIAGNOSIS

The cause of fibromyalgia is unknown.

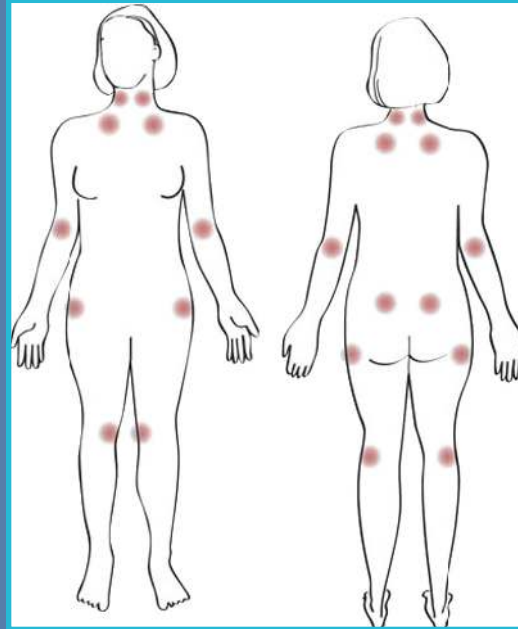
### What is Included:

History of widespread pain for **at least 3 months**

Abnormal tenderness in **11/18 tender points**

Fibromyalgia affects:

An estimated **5 million people in the U.S.**  
More women than men **ages 30-50**



Tender points may be located in the neck, shoulders, back, hips, arms, and legs.

## A PHYSICAL THERAPIST'S PERSPECTIVE

### CHRONIC PAIN CONDITION

- CHARACTERIZED BY WIDESPREAD MUSCULOSKELETAL PAIN, FATIGUE, TENDER POINTS IN JOINTS, AND OTHER SOFT TISSUES
- TENDER POINTS MAY BE IN THE NECK, SHOULDERS, BACK, HIPS, ARMS, AND LEGS

### SYMPTOMS:

- MORNING STIFFNESS · HEADACHES
- PAINFUL MENSTRUAL PERIODS
- TINGLING/NUMBNESS IN HANDS AND FEET

DIFFICULTY SLEEPING



PROBLEMS WITH THINKING & MEMORY ("FIBRO FOG")



HISTORY OF DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY



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## Importance of exercise

Regular moderate exercise is an important part of managing fibromyalgia, and recent studies have indicated that reducing body mass index can reduce the risk of fibromyalgia.

Aerobic conditioning  
Aquatic exercise  
Stretching  
Strengthening

Yoga  
Tai chi  
Deep breathing  
Recreational activities

Manual therapy/modalities  
for pain relief



(These have been shown to decrease pain and improve function, general physical health, and sleep in individuals.)

Each person with fibromyalgia will have a different response to exercise and their physical therapist can help develop a plan to help manage pain and the level of fatigue while learning to improve the overall level of fitness.

## HOW A PHYSICAL THERAPIST CAN HELP

Managing fibromyalgia can be challenging due to daily variation of painful symptoms, deconditioning, and the impact of other related symptoms.

### IMPORTANCE OF EXERCISE:

- RESEARCH HAS SHOWN THAT EXERCISE IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF MANAGING FIBROMYALGIA.

### WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS:



HELPING YOU LEARN TO INTERPRET PAIN SIGNALS, AND MANAGE AND DECREASE SYMPTOMS THROUGH EXERCISE



PROVIDE TIPS TO HELP DEVELOP SELF-CARE SKILLS AND PAIN MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES



- SELF-CARE SKILLS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR MAINTAINING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE, MANAGING STRESS, EATING A HEALTHY DIET, AND IMPROVING SLEEP HABITS.

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