

# **Fibromyalgia – A Doctor’s Nightmare!**

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Fibromyalgia, even though it affects an estimated 10% of the population in the United States today, is still a mystery. Just what is it, what are its symptoms, and what can be done to relieve it?

Fibromyalgia (FMS) is a physician’s nightmare. It is not a disease, but is considered a syndrome. It is a collection of symptoms that are usually accompanied by pain in the muscles, stiffness of the joints and a general feeling of fatigue. Even though lots of research had been conducted relating to this set of symptoms, there is still no known cause or cure for it. The most commonly heard complaints from Fibromyalgia sufferers are: widespread pain in the muscles, ligaments and tendons; stiffness; fatigue and non-restorative sleep. It is most difficult and frustrating to understand since sufferers appear healthy and normal on the outside, but feel miserable on the inside. To date there is no known cause. Most physicians are baffled as to what to do to reduce its symptoms, since there is no inflammation.

The symptoms of FMS can include irritable bowel, spastic bladder, headaches, myofascial pain, chronic fatigue, memory problems, dizziness, numbness, tingling sensations, itching, fluid retention, allergies, abdominal cramps, pelvic pain, and others. FMS affects eight times more women than men. It can strike at any age. Many sufferers have been to doctors for years before finally being diagnosed with FMS. And that is certainly understandable given the complexities of the symptoms and a lack of inflammation. How can a diagnosis be made for something that doesn’t appear to exist? How can you cure something if you don’t even know what causes it? Yet, without attention to them, the symptoms worsen.

The classical diagnosis for FMS is pain in all four quadrants of the body that last longer than three months and affects 11 of 18 tender pressure points. Often these tender pressure points are found by a massage therapist while the sufferer is engaged in a routine massage. Even though the cause of these tender pressure points is unknown, it is believed that there may be common triggering events that have created the onset. Some of the possibilities are an infection, an automobile accident, a hysterectomy, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus or hypothyroidism.

Recent research confirms that a many-faceted approach to helping FMS sufferers provides the greatest relief from its many symptoms as well as the best prognosis. Physicians are finding that there are several adjuncts to traditional methods that can provide an improved quality of life. These adjuncts can be used to improve sleep quality and duration, provide proper nutritional education and needs, help with physical conditioning, restore relaxation and enhance

positive mental imagery. By using a combination of adjunctive remedies the FMS sufferer can often return to a healthier, more productive, and improved quality of life.

It has long been determined by the traditional medical community that our minds can make us ill. And if the mind can make us ill, it can also make us well. Today many informed physicians are referring their patients to alternative and complimentary methods of helping reduce discomfort. And a major player in this arena is a properly trained and certified clinical hypnotherapist.

A study published in the *Journal of Rheumatology* indicated that 40 Fibromyalgia patients were randomly assigned to treatment with either hypnotherapy or physical therapy for 12 weeks and a follow up at 24 weeks. Patients in the hypnotherapy group showed a significantly better outcome with respect to pain reduction, fatigue on awakening, sleep patterns, and general assessment at 12 and 24 weeks. In addition, the hypnotherapy patients showed a significant improvement in their overall levels of discomfort. The authors of the study concluded that hypnotherapy was effective in relieving the symptoms of Fibromyalgia.

A time tested program of symptom relief for Fibromyalgia sufferers is currently being conducted in the Baton Rouge area by Infinity Hypnosis Institute. Consult with your physician if you have the symptoms of Fibromyalgia and ask for advice concerning the use of hypnotherapy as an adjunct to your medical treatment. You may want to consider using a different approach that has brought relief to many who suffer the symptoms of Fibromyalgia.