



Fibromyalgia Management

Fibromyalgia is a complex chronic condition characterised by a wide range of symptoms, not limited to but including:

- ◆ Widespread pain and stiffness (lasting longer than three months)
- ◆ Non-restorative sleep
- ◆ Fatigue affecting ability to work and to perform activities of daily living (ADLs)
- ◆ Cognitive dysfunction affecting memory and concentration
- ◆ Irritable bowel (diarrhea and stomach pain)
- ◆ Low mood and high levels of stress

Research states that there is no current cure for fibromyalgia, although a multi-component approach to treatment is the best option for holistic management which may include the following:

- ◆ Medications (assist with sleep and pain management)
- ◆ Exercise
- ◆ Pacing general activities
- ◆ Pain education
- ◆ Psychological assistance, mindfulness

Tips to consider with exercise

- ◆ Perform exercise you enjoy
- ◆ Start slow and gradually build
- ◆ Use an activity diary to help manage your symptoms post exercise
- ◆ Complete exercise sessions during times of least fatigue to avoid exacerbation



So why exercise?

Research demonstrates that participation in exercise can result in:

- ◆ Less pain and fewer tender spots
- ◆ Higher level of fitness
- ◆ Greater ability to perform ADLs
- ◆ Reduced stress levels and improved mood
- ◆ Improved sleep and energy levels
- ◆ Maintenance of a healthy body weight
- ◆ Improved cardiovascular fitness

It is common for individuals with fibromyalgia to have a fear of movement due to concern that activity and exertion may cause exacerbation of current symptoms. An Exercise Physiologist can provide a tailored and individualised exercise program to assist with reducing this feeling through providing pain management education to increase self-confidence and self-efficacy for engagement with exercise and meaningful activities. Your Exercise Physiologist will also provide education on fatigue management and pacing strategies to assist with symptom management to work towards achievement of your goals

References:

- Serrat et al. (2020). Efficacy of a Multicomponent Intervention for Fibromyalgia Based on Pain Neuroscience Education, Exercise Therapy, Psychological Support, and Nature Exposure (NAT-FM): Study Protocol of a Randomized Controlled Trial. *International Journal Of Environmental Research And Public Health*.
- Busch et al. (2011). Exercise Therapy for Fibromyalgia. *Current Pain And Headache Reports*.