

# Patient Help Sheet

## Fibromyalgia

Here are some tips that you can use to help balance and support your health during this time. Please feel free to call me if you have further questions or concerns.

"You, yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection." -Buddha

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## Acupuncture for Fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia affects approximately two percent of the U.S. population or around five million people. Fibromyalgia is a syndrome with many different symptoms that can vary from patient to patient: the primary symptom all fibromyalgia patients share is widespread, diffuse pain that persists as well as sleep disturbances. The cause of fibromyalgia is unknown although many people with the condition have a history of either physical or emotional trauma.

Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (OM) can offer relief from fibromyalgia. A recent study done in Spain demonstrated a course of nine weekly treatments individualized acupuncture treatments gave patients a 41 percent decrease in pain, while also decreasing other fibromyalgia symptoms such as fatigue, anxiety and depression. And significantly, the results were maintained at the one-year follow up (Vas, 2016). This is one of the most promising and significant studies done to date: previous studies have not been as conclusive, possibly because treatment protocols were generic (not individualized as is standard practice in OM but is not often taken into consideration when Western medical research designs study protocols). Currently only one in five fibromyalgia patients try acupuncture within two years of their diagnosis.

Seek out a licensed acupuncturist in your area to help you determine your fibromyalgia pattern and find the best acupressure/acupuncture points for you to stimulate at home to relieve your symptoms. Here are two to try now:

**DU 26** Located at the center point between the upper lip and nose. You can find it by sliding your finger from your nose to your lip, then feel for the most sensitive spot. Press lightly while breathing in and relaxing the parts of your body your breath focuses your attention upon.

**SP 21** Found by wrapping one arm around to the opposite side and feeling for a tender point on the side of the body about level to your elbow between the seventh and eighth ribs. Press gently while breathing in and relaxing the parts of your body your breath focuses your attention upon. SP 21 is a point that influences microcirculation in the body and is used for widespread, diffuse, all over body pain.

## Oriental Medicine (OM) Nutrition Tips

Stay away from sugar and all things that turn into sugar in the body such a dairy, simple carbohydrates and wheat. You can still enjoy these foods but in a much more limited quantity (after a 21 day total elimination diet add one in a time, spacing the reintroduction in every three days. If that food does not trigger a pain or other fibromyalgia symptom ). The are foods that in OM nutrition create dampness in the body. Dampness can cause pain, especially pain that gets worse with changes in weather, swollen joints, inflammation, bloating and edema.



## Vitamin deficiencies: have you had your levels checked?

Even if your skin is very tender to the touch you may have a Vitamin D deficiency. To increase your Vitamin D levels eat more deep-sea fish or take a high quality fish oil and get some sun every day! Sun yourself two to three times per week for about five to ten minutes per day with as much skin exposed as possible (Holick, 2004). Other vitamins that play a role in pain include: calcium, potassium as well as proteins and healthy fats. Analyze your diet to figure out what's missing. Then focus on food-based sources to use food as medicine to heal your body back to health.

## Breathing Yoga Therapy for Fibromyalgia

Developing a breathing yoga practice with intentional relaxation can become an internal part of nurturing your well-being. With your knees bent feet up on a wall or couch. Support your body with props, something under the legs and/or neck can help relieve pressure and make the pose more restorative. Plus, it helps if you turn your palms up to open the shoulders and relax the chest. Focus on deep breathing and unwinding your body. With each inhale your breath will guide your mind to a different part of your body, follow the sensations in your body. With each exhale, practice letting go of that part of your body. Imagine it melting, softening, unwinding, relaxing, surrendering, turning a color you associate with relaxing... find the right word or imagery that helps your body relax. The 'right' word or image may change from breath to breath, day to day.

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