

# About Fibro Fact Sheets

Information on Fibromyalgia Syndrome  
Fact Sheet 6

## How Is Fibro Treated?

### Lifestyle Adaptations.

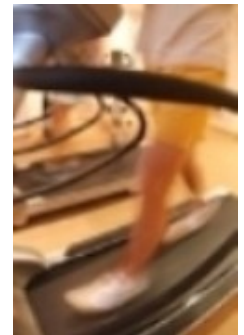
Lifestyle adaptations can be very hard to implement, particularly when they involve giving up enjoyable things. However, most people with Fibro find that the condition is very hard to control without lifestyle adaptations.

**Pacing, or activities management**, is something that many Fibro patients find helpful. This aims to avoid a cycle of overexertion followed by crashing, which can make life very difficult to manage for a Fibro patient and may also lead to a worsening of symptoms. The key is finding a level of activity that can be maintained in the long-term and this will be different for everyone and can vary as symptoms wax and wane. This can mean not doing some activities that the patient might otherwise have done, which is often what people find hard.



**Avoiding stress and learning to manage it better** are strategies that can help many people, not just Fibro patients. However, it is common with chronic illnesses that stress can impact on symptoms, by making the patient run down and more susceptible to flares and infections. Avoiding stressful situations is one way to lower your stress levels, but this is not always possible and so it is good for Fibro patients to learn how to manage stress better so that it doesn't impact on their health. Although depression and anxiety do not cause Fibro, catastrophising (always thinking the worst) and distress are known to increase perception of pain<sup>313</sup>, so it is good to try and avoid these through coping strategies. Relaxation techniques, counselling, CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) and better support in the patient's life generally are all things that can help them to learn to manage stress better<sup>131333</sup>.

For some patients with Fibro, an **individually tailored exercise program** can be helpful<sup>11333</sup>. It is important to make sure that the exercise program is included in the patient's pacing and that changes can be made to accommodate flares of symptoms. Ideally, anyone who is helping someone with Fibro with their exercise program should have some understanding of Fibro and the importance of not pushing you too hard. It can be helpful to see a physiotherapist or rehabilitation specialist at first, particularly if a patient has severe Fibro or is very unfit. The treatment of comorbid conditions, such as myofascial pain or tendonitis, can also be important for the success of an exercise program.



**Better sleep habits** can help with poor sleep or insomnia. This includes going to bed at the same time each night, not watching TV in bed and taking time to relax properly before going to bed.

**A healthy diet** is good for anyone and it is important for someone with Fibro to maintain a reasonably healthy diet because the negative effects of an unhealthy diet may have more of an impact. There isn't a specific diet recommended for Fibro, but it is worth checking for food intolerances and adjusting diet to avoid these. Diet and different ways of eating can also be extremely useful in controlling Irritable Bowel Syndrome, which many people with Fibro have.

References available online at: <http://www.fibroaction.org/Pages/About-Fibro-References.aspx>