



Fibromyalgia & C.F.I.D.S.: Bright Hope for Managing FMS & CFIDS by award-winning author / stress-relief expert Susie Mantell

Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS) and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) can be stressful, discouraging, frustrating and misunderstood conditions that are increasingly being diagnosed. CFS is also referred to as Chronic Fatigue & Immune Dysfunction Syndrome (CFIDS). For a long time mostly integrative practitioners seemed to acknowledge them, while many allopathic (traditional western) physicians denied the existence of either. As they began to see these constellations of vague and diffuse symptoms over and over, eventually FMS actually became a fairly common "catch-all" diagnosis among M.D.'s. They assigned FMS to many people presenting with generalized and persistent flu-like aches, overall malaise and depression, sometimes including "fibro-fog" thinking, accompanied by 18 specifically identified "tender points" that are very painful when pressed.

While I am not a physician, I have had considerable experience with FMS over the years, so I will share a few non-medical observations and hope that some of these things, along with your own professional health care regimen, practices, meds etc., might be helpful.

Patterns Observed by Some

- Often occurs in women over 30, though not always.
- Widely thought to include a sleep disorder-related phenomenon, wherein one wakes frequently spending too much time in alpha brain activity, and awakens feeling sluggish, achy and un-rested.
- Likely exacerbated, and sometimes precipitated by a stressful event.
- Many diagnosed with Gulf War Syndrome manifest FMS symptoms.
- Episodic in nature, with periods of apparent remission.
- Possible bowel and/or sinus connection to the FMS flare-ups.
- Sometimes onset follows physical or emotional trauma or sudden hormonal change.
- CFIDS (Chronic Fatigue) sufferers often test positive for FMS, but the reverse is not necessarily true.
- Sometimes accompanied by, or confused with, Lyme Disease, arthritis etc.
- Personality is often "perfectionistic," with especially high expectations of self.
- Many have allergies and environmental sensitivities.

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My personal belief is that Fibromyalgia Syndrome is a constellation of musculoskeletal symptoms that seem to occur in different people for different reasons, with a broad range of severity and episodic in nature. There may be a digestive correlation for some and/or autoimmune/allergy aspects. The following have been found to ease some people's symptoms and perhaps even improve quality of life over time.

It is easy to become inwardly focused and demoralized when feeling unwell. Many have found extraordinary relief from symptoms of FMS and CFIDS and gone on to live active, happy, vibrant lives simply by making the following lifestyle modifications.

As always, check with your own health care professionals before making changes that could in any way effect your health and well-being. Ask him/her if any of the following might be beneficial and safe for you to try:

- Drink at least 8 glasses of bottled or purified water daily.
- Eliminate sugar, caffeine and alcohol entirely for a trial of 2-4 weeks.
- Eat fiber, green leafy vegetables, small amounts of ground flax seeds, and generally keep bowels moving regularly. Note: Chinese medicine draws a correlation between a healthy digestive system and the respiratory system related to The Lung Meridian. Interestingly, both of these often have implications in FMS.
- Read About: "Leaky Gut Syndrome," and see if any aspects resonate for you.
- Exercise moderately and stretch routinely, in the water if you can, and as close to daily as possible. There is a very fine line between enough and too much for people living with FMS. Too much can lead to a flare, but too little can cause stiffness, depression and inflammation too.
- Have *gentle* massage weekly.
- Breathe mindfully, deeply, pleurably.
- Listen to your body. Rest when you begin to get tired, then get up and move on with your day. Rest every hour if you must. Your body will tell you when it needs to rest. It may also say, "*Okay, get up again now and do one thing--then rest again.*" You will know. Being productive, even in a small way, often lifts our spirits.
- Get good, restful sleep. Barbiturates, can block authentic, restorative sleep levels in which growth hormone is secreted, muscle tears repaired, etc.
- See a licensed health care professional with expertise in FMS and CFIDS, and ask if certain nutritional/herbal supplements and/or Serotonin boosters may be appropriate.
- Try counseling with a skilled therapist you like and trust and who "gets it."

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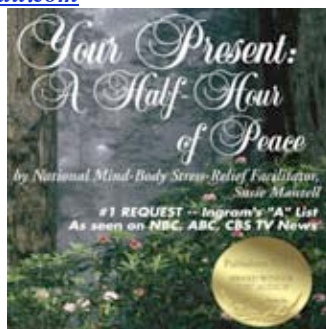


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- Share with a few good friends how you are *really* doing, so they can support you, distract you, and remind you of what might be helpful.
- Pursue interests that are fun and completely unrelated to your health.
- Practice daily meditation (*I listen to my own relaxation C,D "Your Present" A Half-Hour of Peace" audio when I need to relax, can't sleep, or feel tense.*)
- Clear out unhealthy thoughts, behaviors and people. Reduce stress in every way you can.
- Replace those things with dreams, activities and people you enjoy.
- Not everyone can, but I know people who have changed careers or routines altogether to create the next chapter of life that brings them joy and satisfaction and allows for lifestyle modifications that support their wellness.
- Explore dance, yoga, body work, meditative practices, art, etc.
- Smile--even when it's the last thing you feel like doing. Smiling sends the body-mind a signal that all is well and the body-mind believes it.
- Note: see more tips of www.relaxintuit.com for coping with pain, depression etc.
- Laugh often. Think positively and hang around with others who do. Many people who have had FMS or CFIDS live happy, active lives again and find manageable ways to avoid, cope with and move through the very difficult days!

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