

**REVIEWED**

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## Fibromyalgia Health Center

### Fibromyalgia and Exercise

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If you have [fibromyalgia](#) with painful tender points, deep [muscle pain](#), and [fatigue](#), [exercise](#) is probably the last thing on your mind. Yet, exercise may be just what the doctor ordered. Whether it's daily walks, [stretching](#), [swimming](#), [yoga](#), [tai chi](#), or [Pilates](#), low-impact [exercise programs](#) can keep you fit in spite of your [fibromyalgia](#) -- and may help reduce your pain, as well.

#### Why Is Exercise Important for Fibromyalgia?

Experts believe that exercise is essential for keeping muscles strong and flexible, controlling [weight](#), and helping you stay active in other areas of life. In fact, exercise and activity allow patients to have some control over [fibromyalgia](#) and the amount of pain they feel.

It used to be that doctors thought that exercise might worsen [fibromyalgia symptoms](#) or accelerate the disease. So doctors encouraged patients to seek rest, not activity. But recent scientific studies have shown that, for most patients, range of motion, strengthening, and aerobic conditioning exercises are safe and necessary.

#### Does Exercise Boost Endorphins in Those With Fibromyalgia?

Studies show that exercise can help restore the body's neurochemical balance and that it triggers a positive emotional state. Not only does regular exercise slow down the [heart](#)-racing adrenaline associated with stress, but it also boosts levels of natural endorphins -- pain-fighting molecules that may be responsible for the well-known "runner's high." Endorphins help to reduce [anxiety](#), stress, and [depression](#).

#### Does Exercise Boost Serotonin in People With Fibromyalgia?

Serotonin is a neurotransmitter in the [brain](#) that scientists have found to be related to [fibromyalgia](#). Neurotransmitters are [brain](#) chemicals that send specific messages from one [brain](#) cell to another. While



Studies have found that low serotonin levels can contribute to depression. Low serotonin levels can also create aggression. An increased level of serotonin in the brain is associated with a calming, [anxiety-reducing](#) effect. In some cases, it's also associated with drowsiness. A stable serotonin level in the brain is associated with a positive mood state or feeling good over a period of time. Lack of exercise and inactivity can aggravate low serotonin levels.

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[Fibromyalgia and Exercise: Tips for Getting Started](#)

[9 Reasons Depression Is Hard to Treat](#)

[Can Diet Affect Fibromyalgia?](#)

## Further Reading:

[Slideshow: The 7-Minute Workout](#)

[Tai Chi and Qi Gong: Better Balance and Other Benefits](#)

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