Relieving Pain in Fibro Trigger Points

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How to Treat Tenderness and Fibromyalgia Trigger Points

Fibromyalgia pain is widespread and hard to overcome, but sometimes it's the small areas that bring the most discomfort. Sometimes small knots in the myofascial tissue contract and firm up, and that can cause pain that spreads quickly and intensely, interfering with normal movement and range of motion.

Although pain seems inevitable with fibro, there are ways to relieve the shooting pain of trigger points. In fact, it's worthwhile to try to treat these troublesome spots: research shows that relieving the pain of one trigger point can have a noticeable and lasting effect on the whole-body pain that characterizes fibromyalgia. Learn the techniques that work best to eradicate trigger points so you can treat them early and swiftly.

Tender Points vs. Trigger Points

Most fibromyalgia sufferers are very familiar with tender points, and the pain they can cause. Typically, these points scattered around the neck, chest, hips and limbs are each no bigger than a coin, but just pressing the point can be hard to bear. In fact, the original criteria for a fibromyalgia diagnosis was that the patient must experience pain in at least 11 of the 18 tender points (though diagnostic approaches have since changed).

But trigger points are a bit different, and can cause different pain, than tender points. Although many fibromyalgia trigger points correspond to the tender points in the body, they are firm nodules in the muscle. Pressing a trigger point will tend to send a flash of pain throughout the body – where you feel it the most will depend on the specific trigger point.

How to Relieve Trigger Point Pain

When it comes to trigger points, targeted relief is best, but general muscle relaxation can have a significant effect on the shooting pain, too. Some of the best approaches to quell the sharp pain – and the long-term discomfort – include:

- **Therapeutic massage.** Massage is the leading method for trigger point release, and although you can learn how to administer the right pressure on your own body, you'll probably get a greater benefit from a licensed massage therapist. The therapist will be able to target the points with firm pressure, but you'll participate by breathing deeply to help relax the muscles.
- **Heat treatments.** Heat works wonders on muscle pain, so it can help with fibromyalgia trigger points, too. Try a warm bath in the evening, use a hot pack, or apply melted paraffin wax (with the guidance of a therapist or doctor) for an extra deep warming effect.
- **Topical medication.** Oral pain medication tends to bring quite a few side effects, but topical cream can bring relief with fewer problems, especially if your pain is around the joints. Ask your doctor about the best options for your pain, and whether or not they can be used in conjunction with a mild oral medication to improve the effect.

Fibromyalgia and myofascial pain syndrome (MPS) can be confused with, or in some cases, caused by a traumatic event. It’s important to explain your pain as accurately as possible, and if your doctor suspects you might suffer from both conditions, you may need a stronger plan of attack. Trigger point injections, acupuncture and “spray-and-stretch” physical therapy treatments can bring you the relief you need to improve your quality of life.