The Benefits of Fibro Friendly Activities

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Finding a Happy and Healing Hobby

Many seasoned sufferers will tell you that living well with fibromyalgia is about learning to live *around* the pain.

Rather than suffering through the aching, throbbing discomfort, it's up to you to find ways to enjoy your physical capabilities – and all the fulfillment that they can bring – without simply pushing against your limitations.

Activity is integral to fibro management, especially when you feel like your disease is gaining ground on your confidence and capabilities.

Learn how to overcome the threat to your emotional health and physical pain with creative approaches to an active, engaging lifestyle.

Taking Control of Your Pain

The more enjoyment you get out of your downtime, the better your physical and emotional wellbeing.

Engaging, fibro friendly activities that offer opportunities to learn new things, refine your skills, and build your creativity can even help you take control over some common and uncomfortable aspects of fibromyalgia:

Happy Pastimes Fight Depression

Boredom and apathy are damaging – when your mind and body go too long without stimulation, your brain chemistry may suffer.

Unfortunately, a chronic, physically stressful condition like fibromyalgia tends to feed this mindset, which may explain why around 20% of fibro patients also suffer from anxiety or depression.

The good news is that participating in creative activities that you enjoy can improve mental health. In fact, artistic hobbies can be so emotionally beneficial that art therapy programs have become a mainstream course of treatment for a variety of mood disorders.

Using Your Talents Will Distract from Your Limitations

Fibromyalgia is a burden, and the symptoms can weigh on your mind as much as your body. But engaging in an activity that you're good at can distract you from the sore points in your daily management, and that's a powerful tool for stress relief.

Discovering new talents can be an appealing distraction, too. Taking a dance class, language lesson, or workshop that teaches you new techniques can actually help your brain work in different ways, which can bring a

boost in energy, focus, and inspiration.

Short Bursts of Activity Help in the Long-Term

A recent study has shown that short periods of exertion are just as good as more conventional exercise routines – perhaps even better. Patients in the study reported less pain and better function after incorporating “lifestyle physical activity” into their days.

In plain terms, that means finding more ways to move more frequently, whether it’s taking the stairs, adding an extra gardening session, or walking down the street and back if you have a few minutes to spare.

These short bursts of activity can be as beneficial of 30 consecutive minutes of exercise, which is good news for everyone. When it comes to finding a new activity or hobby, keep in mind that you don’t need to devote long stretches of time to enjoy some stress-relief, pain-relief, and a better state of mind.

Next page: tips to find comfortable hobbies.

Tips to Find Comfortable Hobbies

The pain and pressure of your fibro symptoms will affect your life in unique ways, and that can change from day to day.

Flexible activities that don’t require much preparation are better choices, but there are also a few other aspects to keep in mind that will help restore comfort and motivation:

Mind Your Posture

Bending or hunching can be a quick path to unbearable pain, so look to activities that keep you standing upright, sitting tall, or stretching and moving in natural ways.

Sewing may be out, but flower arranging, scrapbooking, or sculpting (with an appropriately high table) can keep stress and strain out of your hands, neck, and back. Yoga and tai chi actually focus on improving your posture, so they are worth a try, too.

Buddy Up

Some things like exercise or working with heavy equipment may seem impossible on sore muscle days, but you can continue to enjoy challenging hobbies when you recruit the help of a friend.

For instance, if you like photography but can no longer lug your camera around for a day, try partnering up with a driver who can shuttle you around to different sites for great photo opportunities (and provide some happy company!).

Camaraderie can help you realize your potential by offering emotional support, but also challenging you to see and do things in different ways.

Adjust Your Expectations

Sometimes frustration can trump your best efforts to pick up a new hobby, or revisit an old one. Remember that mastery takes time, and there’s absolutely nothing wrong with that – look at your hobby as a new path to a new routine, not a goal to be attained and checked off a list.

As many experts insist, the greatest physical and emotional benefits come with honest and creative effort, not with perfection. This is not to say you shouldn’t strive to learn and improve, but it’s just as important to let your

talent grow at a natural pace.

Remind yourself that it’s the act of writing, creating, moving, or testing your mind that matters most, and you’re more likely to stick with it when challenges arise.

Look Online for Inspiration

The internet is a melting pot of helpful and healthy, but also negative and hindering ideas, and browsing through the wrong sorts of sites can leave you feeling sad, angry, or defeated.

But by the same token, there are some really fantastic corners of the web that can offer you a lot of happy inspiration and avenues into your own creativity.

On days where physical activity seems like too much of a burden, take some time to explore Pinterest, Etsy, or other crafting websites where positive, forward-thinking people share ideas and creations.

If you’re not particularly crafty, take a look at writing sites for tips to help you explore and express your ideas. Simple games can kick-start your brain – and clear away some of the fibro fog – so don’t discount some relaxing time with a virtual deck of cards, a word game, or a memory exercise.

Remember that activity is a broad term, and even if you can no longer enjoy some of the things you used to, there is no reason to sit idly by and let your fibromyalgia rule your day!