When Fibromyalgia Is a Pain in the Neck

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Coping With Fibromyalgia Neck Pain

Fibromyalgia is a pain in the neck, literally. While it is known for causing pain throughout the body, fibromyalgia neck pain seems to be a common complaint for many people.

Is there a reason that our necks are more susceptible to pain? If that is the case, what can we do to get relief?

Why Does Fibromyalgia Cause Neck Pain?

The first question we need to answer is, why are we more inclined to have neck pain? There are a few possible reasons for this.

While the exact reason is unknown, one possible culprit could be the trigger points found in the neck. A cluster of tender points can be found in the neck, base of the head, and shoulders, as well as the upper back. It is easy to see why pain may start in the neck or be passed on from pain that originates elsewhere.

It is also believed that those of us with fibromyalgia have lowered blood flow and/or oxygen to our muscles. This could be the cause of a lot of our pain, including fibro neck pain.

It could also be the result of nerve damage, which is another common factor found in people with fibromyalgia.

Poor sleeping habits may also contribute to neck pain. Sleeping in an incorrect position can lead to strain in the neck muscles.

One study suggests that another cause of neck pain with fibromyalgia could be atlas misalignment. The atlas is the top bone of the neck and any misalignment, even the smallest amount, can lead to several uncomfortable symptoms, with the primary symptom being neck pain.

Treatment for Fibromyalgia Neck Pain

The next question we need to be answered is, what can be done to treat the neck pain so common in fibromyalgia? These seven fibromyalgia neck pain treatment options might provide you with some relief.

Move Around

Exercising with fibromyalgia is a big challenge, but it has been found that movement is one of the best things to help lessen fibro pain. Gentle stretching exercises help prevent the muscles becoming stiff and weak. Inactivity can increase pain from the trigger points in the neck.

Exercise like Pilates or swimming can be beneficial for many with fibromyalgia. Even just simple stretches and a

moderate amount of activity and movement throughout the day can be a big help.

Fibromyalgia News Today shared some exercises that can help specifically for relieving neck pain:

- Stand against a wall with your arms extended. Move your arms up and down, as if you were making a snow angel. Move slowly to feel the tension. Keep your head up and your back against the wall the entire time. Do a set of 10.
- Sit upright with your arms at the side. Shrug your shoulders and release them in drastic fashion while dropping them down. The muscles may tremble after releasing them. It is only momentary and feels better when finished.
- Sit upright, slowly bring your head down to your chest, then slowly bring your head up and gently put your head back. Try doing this in one fluid motion. As you do, slowly open your mouth so that it is fully open when your head is back.

Gentle Massage

Massage therapy can be helpful for relieving neck pain. Even self-massage tools have been helpful for some people.

Acupuncture

Acupuncture therapy has been a notable help for many people when it comes to treating neck pain.

Relax

Learning to relax is an art form, but a very beneficial one. Stress leads to physical tension, which then leads to pain. Relaxation techniques can be a big help in decreasing pain. Mindfulness, deep breathing, and body scanning can all be extremely helpful tools.

Setting aside time to do things that you enjoy, or that make you feel calm, can help make life's stresses more bearable. Some enjoy journaling, painting or coloring, spending time in nature, playing games, taking baths, or doing puzzles. Whatever it is that brings you peace and joy, make time for that!

Magnesium

Many people with fibromyalgia are low in magnesium, which results in muscle cramps and weakness, among other things. If you are low in magnesium, taking a supplement or using a magnesium oil or spray can help relax your muscles and relieve neck pain.

Topical Cream

There are several creams and ointments that can be used to soothe sore or stiff muscles, and reduce pain in the neck. Many of these products contain natural pain relievers, such as arnica.

Medication

Over the counter pain medication, such as ibuprofen, naproxen, or acetaminophen are options that many turn to for relief. A doctor may also prescribe you a muscle relaxer to help for more severe pain.

When I turned to the fibromyalgia community on social media, I was given a few suggestions of things that have helped others cope with fibromyalgia neck pain. These suggestions included essential oils, rice packs used for heat therapy, and over the counter pain relievers and muscle relaxers.

Research is still being done to find answers as to why fibromyalgia causes all of the pain that it does. Even though we don't have all the answers yet, we can take comfort knowing that we are not suffering alone.