The Importance of Exercise for Fibromyalgia Patients

by JENNA COOKE

Embrace the Benefits of Exercise

As a fibromyalgia patient, I feel exercise makes me invincible. I feel positive even when sore because I know I can conquer a routine, or sweat myself to pieces trying, and that gives me great pride.

Pain patients are more used to feeling pain than pride. The pain is emotional as well as physical; guilt from missed social opportunities and staying in bed occurs frequently among us.

Exercise helped me say goodbye to those negative feelings. Not to say I don't have bad days — I just handle them better now.

Plain Fact and Pain Fact

The amount of exercise people can do varies with age, genetics, illness and even location. However, many people underestimate their ability to work out, especially pain patients.

Many people in pain make an accurate assumption about their initial inability. What they usually make an inaccurate assumption about is the extent of their future gain, which keeps them stuck in a cycle of pain and weakness.

That's a plain fact based on a pain fact.

We all owe it to ourselves to take preventive measures to help cut down on medications and other treatments, as well as fibromyalgia weight gain — getting physical does that.

Even familiar pain becomes a comfort people cling to when faced with challenges like increasing their physical activity in the face of fibromyalgia. Step out of the circle. Every day, take one more step away from the circle into a new realm.

What I Do

My preferred workout routines use body weight, weights and speed. I combine exercises such as:

- Timed sprints done in various intervals
- Repeated runs uphill
- Intervals featuring burpees, push-ups, squats and planks
- Heavy rope work
- Weighted ball balancing and ab work using weighted balls
- Weight lifting
- Flexibility work including yoga and stretching

These are just a few of the types of workouts I enjoy doing. I stay open to new workouts and new versions of these old favorites.

Whatever I do, I move at a brisk pace for at least 20 minutes, and that often includes resting if I am doing something like sprints or intervals. Rest intervals help the body make gains so they are vital to any routine.

Workout Resources

In my opinion, YouTube provides the best resource for finding workouts. You can find a plethora of workouts for all levels, ages and people.

Best of all, the majority of the workouts on YouTube are free. You may have to sit through a few commercials, but that's a small price to pay for free workouts you can do in the privacy of your own home, led by professional trainers who update on a regular basis.

In no particular order, the main YouTube workout channels I enjoy are:

- FitnessBlender
- Melissa Bender Fitness
- Yoga With Adriene
- Blogliates
- SuperHeroFitnessTV
- Tony Horton
- GymRa

These channels offer exercise demonstrations and helpful workout tips during routines. They also explain and show how to do alternative movements if needed.

My suggestion is to watch a video before doing it to make sure you can do the moves. Also, make sure to keep water handy.

Feel free to find your own workout or to even create your own workouts. After all, your imagination may be able to come up with something that works really great for you. I do this a lot.

Another great advantage is that YouTube remains available any time of day, which means workouts are automatically suited to my schedule. There's no need to travel, either; it's all there for my convenience so excuses about working out become harder and harder to make.

When I first began working out, I started with workouts that were appropriate for my fitness level, as advised by my doctor. It's good idea to see your doctor before starting your workout program, even if you feel healthy or don't have any obvious concerns.

It's My Life

You may read this article and feel enraged because I dared to speak about the benefits of working out, and that I, in a roundabout way, said it comes down to determination.

Well, it does come down to that. You either want to do it or you don't. Both are fine.

In this day and age, the benefits of working out cannot be denied. You have the right to deny the benefits on a personal level, or to revel in them.

Fibromyalgia hurts me, but I choose not to let it stop me. People with a lot more pressing physical problems lead very busy lives and that includes exercise. I choose to emulate that view.

Look at self-help motivational speaker Sean Stephenson. Sean suffers from osteogenesis imperfecta, a disease which renders him with supremely fragile bones. He uses a wheelchair. He stands three feet tall. He works out.

If you want to make a change, start moving and stay moving. If you don’t, chalk this up to a good read that you will ignore.