



Fibromyalgia Hints and Tips

- It's ok to give in. Go to bed, get comfortable and rest. It may mean the difference between one day in bed and four days in bed.
- Acceptance. Denying or 'refusing to have' fibro is counterproductive and doesn't make it go away. You can't walk it off. Try to concentrate on the things you can do. On 'Flare' days this may be going to bed and watching a film- you might learn something from watching it!
- Consider the vocabulary you use to yourself – You aren't 'useless', 'hopeless' or 'weak'. You're not well.
- Clear language with other people. Have an agreed code word. If, for example, you start to feel ill when out saying, 'I'm done' to your companion will let them know that it's time to go and you can leave without lengthy explanations or drama. Dealing with other people's judgements, real or perceived, adds stress.
- It's difficult to explain the condition to others and there is often a fear of the 'Aye, right' expression that some people get. Sometimes it's easier to just say, for example, 'Some days even my hair hurts' or, 'It's like all over toothache and it's really tiring' You don't have to explain more than that.
- Guilt. Please try not to feel guilty. This is difficult when you have plans made with others and have to call off at the last minute or you feel you have let your partner/child/parent/dog down. There's nothing taken out of the next day and last minute jaunts can be fun. Wave a gentle but definite cheerio to guilt.
- More Guilt. If you need to go to bed and the disappointment/negative feelings make you feel like you want to have a good weep, feel free to go ahead. It's not weakness and it may well release a lot off stress and actually speed up your recovery.
- Plan ahead. If you know that you are going to be doing something that will be stressful (Good or bad) ensure that you have the next day free to recover. If you're fine the next day count it as a bonus and do something you like.
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- More planning. It's worthwhile, on good days, to have some meals in the freezer for the days when you can't stand long enough to cook.
- Snacks – mixed fruit and nuts/trail mix, 'Skips' and 'Quavers' among others are lower fat content than some crisps. Skips and Quavers are easier to eat when your face hurts.
- It's understandable to feel thoroughly fed up that you can't do things that you used to be able to and see friends/ people your own age managing fine. If you're sociable and can't go out, suggest a pyjama party to friends, if you can't drink alcohol consider having a 'Mocktail night'.
- Brain fog. It's really frustrating trying to talk to someone and not remembering a word or what you were going to say. It's absolutely ok to say 'Sorry, I can't words just now' It takes the pressure off and often the word comes to you. Worth bearing in mind that other people's expressions can be misread – generally people want to help and aren't judging you so it takes the pressure off them too.
- Books. If you are a reader and like a 'big' book, consider getting a Kindle/e-reader. Heavy books are painful to hold and it's frustrating when they fall out of your hands.
- Communication with partner. Sometimes it hurts to be touched/hugged. Reassure partner that it's not because you don't want/like them. An open letter to them can sometimes be easier than trying to explain. Write this when you are well as generally these conversations happen when you are ill and emotion becomes involved and sharp words can be exchanged.
- Supplements. Always check with GP first. I take Vitamin D and Magnesium along with Probiotics and Berocca daily along with anti -inflammatories. It doesn't seem to do any harm and it feels like I'm trying.
- Exercise. Gentle and consistent when you can. Think 'cat' Gentle long stretches before getting up can help – also means you can tell if you have feeling in your legs and avoids falls.
- Be aware of the weather. Changes in air pressure seem to affect pain, as does extreme heat/cold and dampness. None of this is scientifically proven but is widely reported by FM sufferers.
- Consider changing lightbulb wattage/colour. Lower wattage/warm tone lightbulbs are easier on light sensitive eyes.
- Pace yourself. Always tempting on a good day to push yourself to catch up with tasks not done while ill. Please don't do this. Consider setting a timer – 20 minutes busy, 20 minutes rest. Rinse and repeat. Probably the most important thing of all.
- Some people will judge. That is on them. Avoid these people.