

Complementary & Alternative Therapies

Massage Therapy

“Massage involves the practitioner moving muscles and underlying tissues mostly with his or her hands. There are various types of massage, including Swedish, deep connective tissue, and Shiatsu massage.

The main goals of massage therapy are to:

- increase blood circulation,
- loosen sore muscles,
- remove toxins from muscles,
- align muscles and joints that are misaligned, and
- increase the flow of nutrients.



Massage helps to relieve stress and anxiety. You should avoid it if you have open sores, or circulatory problems such as blood clots.”¹

Acupressure

“In acupressure, the practitioner applies pressure with his or her fingers at certain points in the body.”¹ The idea is to use gentle pressure on the painful knots in your muscles to relieve discomfort.² You can perform acupressure on your own trigger points (see *Soothing Sore Muscles* in [Self-Help Strategies and Lifestyle Changes](#)).

Acupuncture

Acupuncture is like acupressure; however, instead of applying pressure, the acupuncture practitioner inserts very small needles at certain points in the body, based on a Chinese theory of restoring energy

flow, blood flow, and levels of neurotransmitters in the brain and spinal cord.^{1,3}

Trigger Point Therapy

“In trigger point therapy, a therapist applies sustained pressure for a few minutes at a time, at specific trigger points. Trigger points are the points in the body where muscle pain begins.”¹

Chiropractic Care

“The goal of chiropractic care is to realign the vertebrae of the spine. A chiropractor stretches the vertebrae to relieve pressure from nerves and allow the body to heal itself. It is based on the belief that certain illnesses are caused by misaligned vertebrae.”¹

Yoga & Tai Chi

“These practices combine meditation, slow movements, deep breathing, and relaxation. Both have been found to be helpful in controlling fibromyalgia symptoms.”³

Sources:

1. The Patient Education Institute (2008). X-plain fibromyalgia: Reference summary [online]. Retrieved February 7, 2011. From <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorials/fibromyalgia/id309104.pdf>.
2. Fibromyalgia Network (2011). Treatment [online]. Retrieved February 16, 2011. From <http://www.fmnetnews.com/basics-treatment.php>.
3. Mayo Clinic (2011). Fibromyalgia [online]. Retrieved February 7, 2011. From <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/fibromyalgia/DS00079>.