

**F**ibromyalgia presents a range of challenges that can affect daily life. Physical therapy offers a structured approach to address these challenges, focusing on improving movement, function and overall well-being. This leaflet explains how physical therapy can help in managing fibromyalgia.

Of course! Let's delve deeper into each of the benefits, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how physical therapy can be a game-changer for those with fibromyalgia:

### BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL THERAPY FOR FIBROMYALGIA

- **Pain Management:** One of the primary goals of physical therapy is to address the chronic pain that fibromyalgia patients experience. Through a combination of targeted exercises, manual techniques, and modalities like heat or cold therapy, physical therapists aim to decrease pain levels. The emphasis is on understanding the body's pain response and using therapeutic methods to ease it. Over time, patients often find they can achieve significant pain reduction without solely relying on medications.
- **Improved Mobility:** Fibromyalgia can make even simple movements challenging. Physical therapy focuses on improving the range of motion in joints, ensuring that activities like climbing stairs, reaching overhead, or even turning the neck become smoother. By working on specific muscle groups and joints, therapists can help restore natural movement patterns, making daily life more manageable.
- **Building Strength:** A body weakened by fibromyalgia can benefit immensely from strength training. Physical therapists introduce resistance exercises, starting with light weights or resistance bands, gradually progressing as the patient's strength improves.

This not only bolsters muscle mass but also provides



# Physical Therapy and Fibromyalgia

better stability to the skeletal system, reducing the likelihood of strains, sprains and falls.

- **Better Sleep:** Sleep disturbances are a common complaint among fibromyalgia patients. Regular physical activity, especially under the guidance of a therapist, can help regulate the body's sleep-wake cycle. By reducing pain and muscle tension before bedtime, physical therapy can pave the way for deeper, more restorative sleep.
- **Reduced Fatigue:** Constant fatigue can be debilitating. Physical therapy addresses this by promoting efficient muscle function and improving cardiovascular health. As patients engage in aerobic exercises, their stamina increases, leading to a noticeable reduction in daily fatigue. Over time, activities that once seemed exhausting become more achievable.
- **Flexibility:** Muscle stiffness and rigidity can be particularly distressing in the mornings or after periods of inactivity. Physical therapists incorporate flexibility exercises into the treatment plan, focusing on elongating the muscles and improving joint mobility. Techniques like dynamic stretching or even yoga-inspired poses can be introduced, helping to combat the stiffness that fibromyalgia often brings.

### COMPONENTS OF PHYSICAL THERAPY FOR FIBROMYALGIA

- **Exercise Therapy:** Beyond the basics, therapists might introduce balance exercises or functional training, ensuring you can perform daily tasks with ease.
- **Manual Therapy:** This hands-on approach not

only alleviates pain but also improves circulation, promoting faster muscle recovery. Techniques such as gentle joint movements and soft tissue massage can help improve mobility and reduce muscle tension.

- **Pain Management Techniques:** Modern physical therapy clinics might also offer innovative pain relief methods like dry needling or laser therapy.
- **Education and Self-Management:** Therapists often provide resources like booklets or videos, ensuring you can continue beneficial exercises at home.

### THE EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL BENEFITS

Engaging in physical therapy can provide a sense of routine and purpose. Achieving small therapy goals can boost confidence and provide a sense of accomplishment, which can be beneficial for mental well-being.

### GETTING STARTED WITH PHYSICAL THERAPY

The first session typically involves an assessment to understand your current condition and goals. This partnership with your therapist is crucial, and your feedback is invaluable in shaping the therapy plan.

If you're considering physical therapy as part of your management plan for fibromyalgia, reach out using the contact details below. Additionally, consider seeking out local support groups for added community support.

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