

Practical Tips for Living Well with

Fibromyalgia

Day to day ...

Yes, *living well* applies to you! A healthy lifestyle can help you feel your best—even when you don't. Remember these tips when days are tough to manage.

- 1. Eat well.** Eating well may also help you feel well. Talk to your health care provider or a nutritionist about a healthy diet and food options. Try to cut back on junk food and stick to healthy foods like fruit, raw veggies and nuts. You may also want to keep small, healthful snacks on hand for when you need a quick boost. Buy fresh food regularly, and cook when you're up to it.
- 2. De-stress.** Even in the best of health, stress can be hazardous. Take time to step out of stress and regroup each day. Listen to a favorite song, take a walk around the block—or even down the hall. Close your eyes and remember a special place or moment.
- 3. Delegate, delegate, delegate.** It's not easy for many women, but assigning work to others lessens the load—and you deserve it! Give family members (and even friends) the tasks that you find the toughest. And, rearrange the list from time to time.
- 4. Do what you love.** Carve out time for those things that mean the most to you—and do them. Is there something you do that you love but don't always feel well enough to do it: a movie with friends, a girls' night out? Go back to something in your past you used to love—knitting, scrapbooking. Find yourself again.

On the job ...

Anyone's 9-to-5 routine can take its toll. For women with fibromyalgia, workday routines may be especially daunting. But, these simple tips for managing work-related challenges can help you give a good performance.

- 1. Check your inventory.** Are you still enjoying what you do and how you do it? If your job responsibilities aren't a good match for you now, with your symptoms, explore what skills and interests you have that might work better in your current situation.
- 2. Be flexible and be kind ... to yourself.** Know your limitations and ask for help on days that you need it. Talk to your manager about flexible work options, like adjusting your hours or working from home occasionally. Then, work out a plan that everyone knows about and agrees with.

- 3. Don't go it alone.** A career coach may be able to help you expand your horizons and help you match your current skills and talents to a specific job—even your current one, with your condition in mind. Or, seek guidance from peers or a supervisor who knows you well and whom you trust if you need help figuring out next best steps.
- 4. Not working regularly? Tips still apply.** If you spend your days (or want to) volunteering at a local library or in your child's school, workday tips still apply. Ask for hours that best fit your needs and take on tasks that make sense for you to do. It's important to stay connected—whether you're working full-time or not.

While traveling ...

No matter where your travels take you, across the globe or just over the state line, traveling with fibromyalgia can be a challenge. Don't let your condition keep you at home. Use these tips to keep your travels fun and as easy as possible.

- 1. Plan ahead.** Check some of the top travel Web sites or disability-specific travel Web sites for specials, and review the FAA's recommendations for navigating airports with assistive devices. Think through each step of your trip—do you need a hotel room near the elevator to limit walking long distances? Is your rental car company or shuttle service aware of your needs?
- 2. Bring enough medication.** Pack an extra week's worth of medication in case you get stranded or your travel plans are extended. Keep your medication with you in a carry-on bag or purse; lost luggage with vital medications can ruin a vacation.
- 3. Pack lightly.** Pack as lightly as possible to avoid fatigue and pain from toting heavy bags. Invest some time in finding your perfect bag. Today's best bags are made of lightweight materials and have extendable handles and wheels that rotate to make pulling the bag easy.
- 4. Travel smart each step of the way.** Before every step of your journey, do your homework using trip planners, Web sites, and referrals from trusted friends. You don't have to use up all your valuable energy when you travel, as long as you plan ahead and ask for what you need.



For more information on living well with fibromyalgia,
visit www.HealthyWomen.org

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