

# *Fibromyalgia: How Can Exercise Help?*

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**Exercising  
With  
Fibromyalgia  
Requires A  
Tricky  
Balance...**

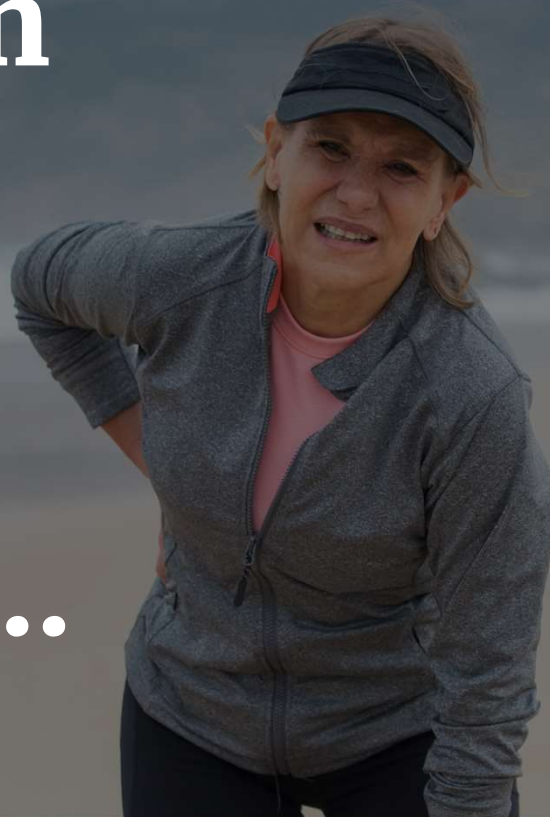


**Too Little  
And We Do  
Not Benefit  
Much...**





**Too Much  
And We  
Can  
Increase  
Our Pain...**



# Exercise Recommendations For Fibromyalgia Can Help!



# What Is Fibromyalgia?



- ▶ Chronic & Complex Disorder
  - ▶ Affects 2% Of Canadians
- ▶ Symptoms Include:
  - ▶ Pain And Tenderness
  - ▶ Fatigue
  - ▶ Trouble Sleeping
  - ▶ Increased Sensitivity
- ▶ Cause Is Unknown

<https://www.fmaware.org/fibromyalgia-symptoms/>

# Diagnosis

- ▶ No Exact Test
  - ▶ Currently Being Studied
- ▶ Diagnosis Includes:
  - ▶ Medical History
  - ▶ Physical Exam
  - ▶ Ruling Out Other Conditions
- ▶ Diagnostic Criteria:
  - ▶ Widespread Pain
  - ▶ Generalized Pain In At Least 4 Of 5 Regions, Is Present
  - ▶ Symptoms Present For At Least 3 Months





# Living With Fibromyalgia

- ▶ There Are Various Ways To Help Manage
  - ▶ Exercise
  - ▶ Education
  - ▶ Social Support
  - ▶ Therapy

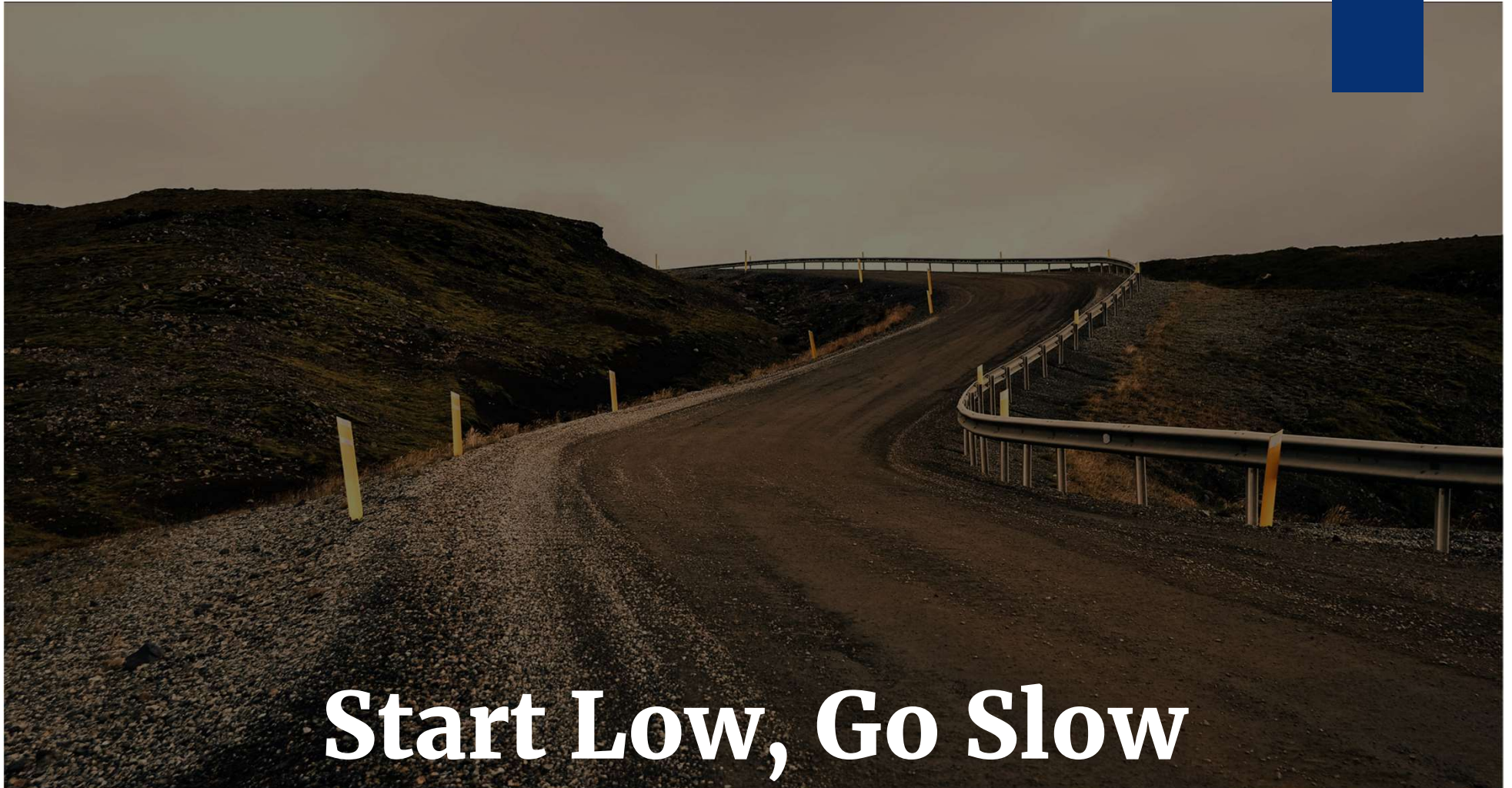




# Benefits of Exercise

- ▶ Reduces:
  - ▶ Pain
  - ▶ Stiffness
  - ▶ Anxiety
  - ▶ Fatigue
  - ▶ Depression
- ▶ Improves:
  - ▶ Functional Abilities





**Start Low, Go Slow**

# Types Of Exercise



Strength



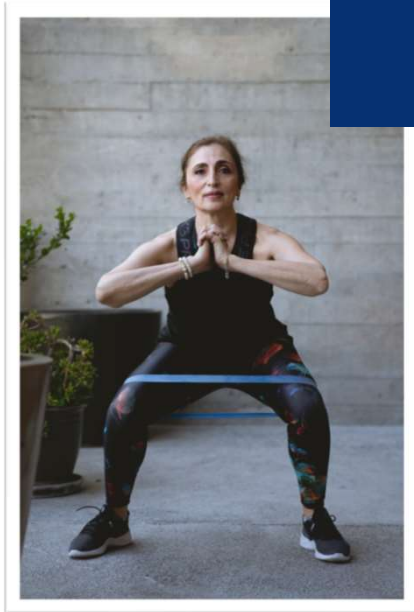
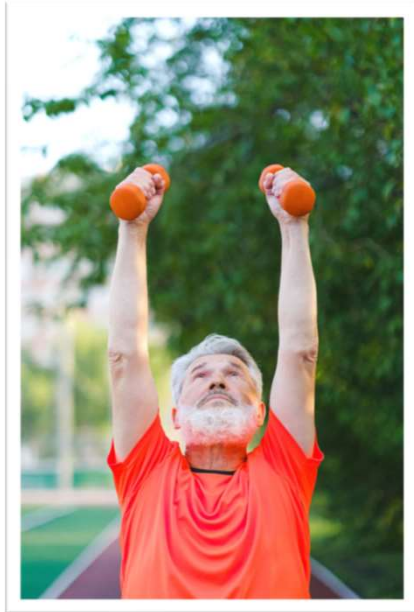
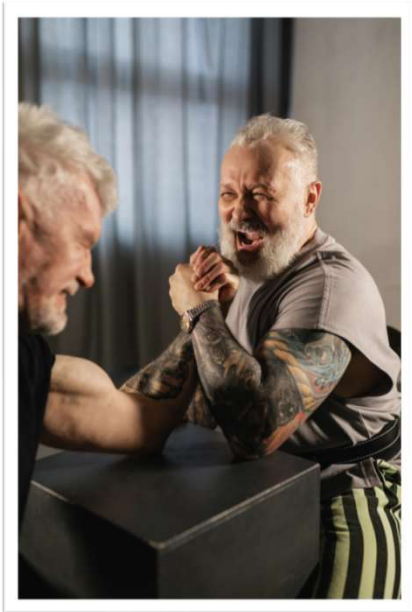
Aerobic



Flexibility



Balance



# Strength Training



# Strength Training

- ▶ Meta-Analysis Found Benefits In:
  - ▶ Muscle Strength
  - ▶ Pain Relief
  - ▶ Depression
  - ▶ Physical Disability
  - ▶ Quality Of Life

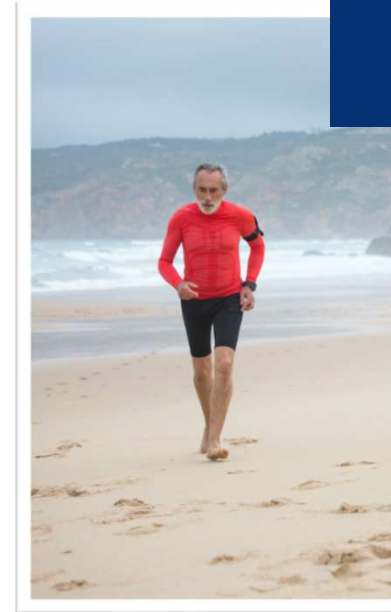
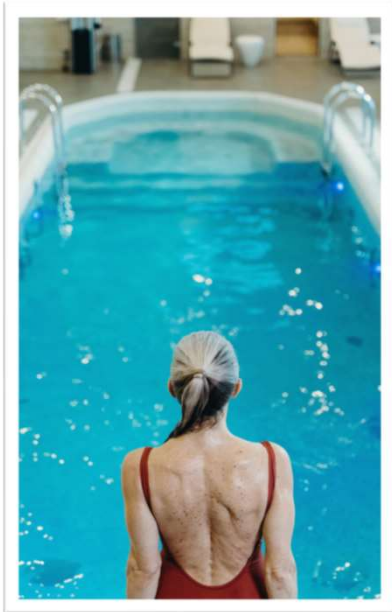
Evidence-Based Clinical Practice Guidelines for Strengthening Exercises<sup>a</sup>

Authors	Description of Trial	Study Design and N	Grade A <sup>b</sup>	Grade C+	Grade C	Grade D+	Grade D
Häkkinen et al (2001) <sup>26</sup> Jadad scale score: 1	2 ×/week for 21 wk	RCT N=21	Pain relief Physical disability Depression	Quality of life	Pain relief Sleep quality	Pain relief	Pain relief
Häkkinen et al (2002) <sup>27</sup> Jadad scale score: 1	2 ×/week for 21 wk	RCT N=21	N/A	Muscle strength	Pain relief Muscle strength	N/A	N/A
Jones et al (2002) <sup>28</sup> Jadad scale score: 3	60 min 2 ×/week for 12 wk	RCT N=56	Quality of life	Depression Anxiety Flexibility	Pain relief Muscle strength Shoulder strength Quality of life Self-efficacy	N/A	N/A
Valkeinen et al (2004) <sup>29</sup> Jadad scale score: 1	60–90 min 2 ×/week for 21 wk	RCT N=26	N/A	Muscle strength	Pain relief	N/A	N/A
Valkeinen et al (2005) <sup>30</sup> Jadad scale score: 1	2 ×/week for 21 wk	RCT N=26	Muscle strength	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

<sup>a</sup> RCT=randomized controlled trial, N/A=not available.

<sup>b</sup> There were no grade B or grade D– guidelines for these selected studies.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/18497302/>

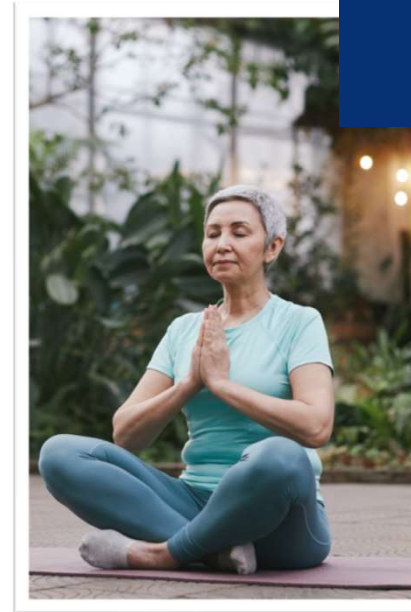
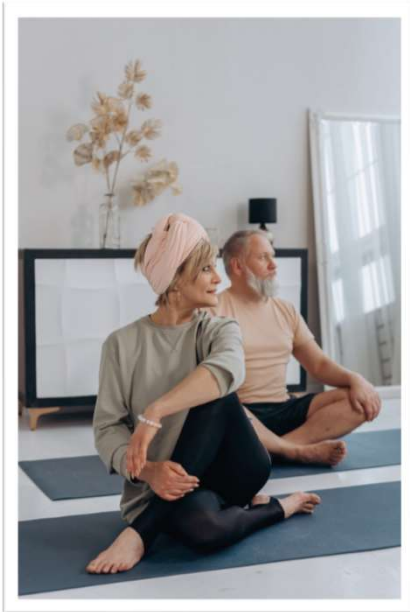


# Aerobic Exercise

# Aerobic Exercise

- ▶ Also Known As Cardiovascular Exercise
- ▶ Meta-Analysis Showed Positive Effects On:
  - ▶ Global Well-being
  - ▶ Physical Function
  - ▶ Possibly On Pain And Tender Points
  - ▶ Maximal Cardiorespiratory Tests





# Flexibility Training



# Flexibility Training

- ▶ Very Limited Current Findings
  - ▶ Lack Of Standardization
  - ▶ Can Still Be Helpful
- ▶ Stretching, In General, Can Help With:
  - ▶ Reduced Pain
  - ▶ Improved Range Of Motion
  - ▶ Reduce Risk Of Injury



# Recommendations

- ▶ Take Your Time
  - ▶ Everyone Is Different
- ▶ Try Different Activities
  - ▶ You May Discover Something You Love
- ▶ Adjust Your Exercise Routine To Your Lifestyle
  - ▶ Not The Other Way Around!
- ▶ Have Fun!
  - ▶ Don't Let It Become A Chore



# Precautions

- ▶ Start Small
- ▶ Check For Triggers
  - ▶ Temperature, Long Bouts, Time Of Day
- ▶ Warm Up/Cool Down
- ▶ End With Relaxation Exercises
- ▶ Create SMART Goals
- ▶ Try Light Movements During Flare-ups



# Put It All Together!



## Aerobic

150 Minutes Of  
Moderate - Vigorous  
Activity

Can Be Broken Up  
Into 10 Min Bouts



## Strength

2 (Or More) Days  
Should Include  
Various Muscle  
Groups

\*Rest Between Days



## Balance

Include It In Your  
Other Workouts Or  
Set Time Aside  
A Few Times A Week



## Flexibility

Include At The End  
Of Your Other  
Exercises



Check Out This Resource!

Being **Active** with  
**Fibromyalgia**

Exercise  
is Medicine®

AMERICAN COLLEGE  
of SPORTS MEDICINE®

[https://www.exerciseismedicine.org/assets/page\\_documents/EIM\\_Rx%20for%20Health\\_Fibromyalgia.pdf](https://www.exerciseismedicine.org/assets/page_documents/EIM_Rx%20for%20Health_Fibromyalgia.pdf)