



Six Things To Know About Mind and Body Practices for Fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia syndrome is a chronic disorder characterized by widespread pain, diffuse tenderness, fatigue, and a number of other symptoms that can interfere with a person's ability to carry out daily activities. It is estimated that fibromyalgia affects 5 million American adults. Most people with fibromyalgia—between 80 and 90 percent—are women. However, men and children also can have the disorder.

Fibromyalgia can be difficult to diagnose and treat. Treatment often involves an individualized approach that may include both conventional (prescription drugs, analgesics, and NSAIDs) and other approaches such as exercise, muscle strength training, cognitive behavioral therapy, movement/body awareness practices, massage, acupuncture, and balneotherapy (hydrotherapy). Here are 6 things you should know about what the science says about mind and body practices for fibromyalgia:

1. **Research on complementary health approaches for fibromyalgia is preliminary, but there is some encouraging evidence** that practices such as tai chi, qi gong, yoga, massage therapy, acupuncture, and balneotherapy may help relieve some fibromyalgia symptoms.
2. **Meditative movement therapies such as tai chi, qi gong, and yoga may result in modest improvements in sleep disturbances, fatigue, depressed mood, and health-related quality of life for those with fibromyalgia**, according to a 2013 review of scientific studies. But larger, high-quality studies are needed to confirm these results.
3. **Massage showed modest, short-term benefits for fibromyalgia symptoms in a review of several small studies.** However, the investigators noted that all reviewed studies had problems and that additional rigorous research is needed on massage for fibromyalgia symptoms.
4. **Investigators found low-to-moderate evidence that acupuncture, compared with no treatment or standard therapy, improves pain and stiffness in people with fibromyalgia.** However, this 2013 review of scientific studies concluded that larger studies are needed.
5. **There is a little evidence that balneotherapy may provide short-term improvement in pain and health-related quality of life for those with fibromyalgia**, but definite conclusions about the value of balneotherapy cannot be reached based on the current evidence.
6. **The mind and body practices discussed here are generally considered safe for healthy people when they're performed appropriately.** If you have any health problems, talk with both your health care provider and the complementary health practitioner/instructor before starting to use a mind and body practice

Source: National Institutes of Health / National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) ; <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/tips/fibromyalgia>

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