



## Fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia is a chronic condition that is difficult to diagnose and can cause widespread pain and fatigue. While its cause is unknown, it's thought to be associated with changes in how the nervous system processes pain.

Trauma, surgery, infection, arthritis, or major emotional stress may trigger fibromyalgia, or it may gradually develop over time. Chronic conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus, and ankylosing spondylitis, may increase your risk of developing fibromyalgia.

Managing chronic pain is complex. While in some situations, when dosed appropriately, prescription opioids are an appropriate part of medical treatment; there are risks, including depression, addiction, overdose, and withdrawal symptoms when stopping use.

With opioid abuse an unprecedented national public health epidemic, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended safe alternatives, including physical therapy, to opioids for treating pain. Learn more about how a physical therapist can help you safely manage your fibromyalgia at [MoveForwardPT.com/ChoosePT](https://MoveForwardPT.com/ChoosePT).

Fibromyalgia affects almost 5 million people in the United States; 80% to 90% are women.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Fibromyalgia is a complex condition involving many different signs and symptoms that can be worsened by stress. You may experience:

- Widespread pain
- "Tender points," sensitive to firm touch
- Muscle stiffness
- Headache
- Thinking and memory problems
- Fatigue
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Pain or cramps in the abdomen or pelvis
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Irritable bladder syndrome
- Difficulty sleeping; waking unrefreshed
- Jaw pain
- Numbness or tingling

## HOW A PHYSICAL THERAPIST CAN HELP

Although there is no definitive cure at this time, a physical therapist can help you manage the pain, mobility, and range of motions issues associated with fibromyalgia.