



# The M&M Motion Minute

## Help for Fibromyalgia

If you suffer from fibromyalgia, you may be going through a flare-up period now. Fibromyalgia seems to flare-up when there is a change of seasons and this year seems to be especially challenging. The main symptom of fibromyalgia is chronic pain—an “aching all over.” It may be associated with fatigue, numbness and tingling, or headaches. Physical therapy is one tool that may be of great help. If

you’ve never used physical therapy to help with your symptoms, or even if you have, but you can’t control your current flare-up, give us a call.

One of the chief symptoms is tight, aching muscles. We can help by using our manual therapy techniques to stretch out and loosen up the muscles. Then we can guide you back to a good routine of stretches, strengthening and aerobic activities to keep the symptoms at

bay. Two lifestyle changes you can do is to keep stress levels down and get enough sleep. Stress and lack of sleep aggravate your symptoms and make it harder to get back on track. Relaxation techniques help control your stress and we have several techniques to walk you through this, along with some ways to get better sleep. We also offer several fun ways to get the aerobic activity you need to keep you body feeling good.

## Spring Picnic

We have set the date of our annual Spring Appreciation Picnic, so clear your schedule! The day is Saturday May 6 from 11-2pm. We will again provide hamburgers, hotdogs, side dishes and baked goods. All of our past and current patients and their families/

friends are invited as well as any referring doctor.

We truly enjoy the opportunity to catch up with everyone and meet your families. We encourage everyone to stop by, even if you don’t have time to stay for lunch.

We would like to offer each of you a personal *thank you* as we now approach our 5th anniversary here in South Milwaukee. If you plan on attending, please call the week before so we make sure we have enough food for everyone.

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### M&M PT Can Help With:

- Fibromyalgia
- TMJD (temporomandibular joint disease)
- Headaches/whiplash/cervical pain
- Rotator cuff and shoulder injuries
- Golf/tennis elbow, carpal tunnel
- Low back pain, sciatica, sacroiliac pain, hip pain
- Knee/ankle injuries and disorders
- And More

# Study shows manual therapy to be most effective for relief of neck pain

Neck pain and stiffness is a common problem for Americans, affecting 10-15% of the population. A study published in the "Annals of Internal Medicine" compares the result of three different methods of treatment for neck pain and stiffness.

The researches took 183 patients, age 18 to 70 years and divided them into 3 groups. Group 1 received only manual therapy treatment for one 45 minute session per week for 6 weeks. Group 2 received only two 30- minute exercise and stretching sessions per week for 6 weeks. Group 3 received only the traditional medical treatment from a primary care physician which included analgesic medication, counseling on prevention education, and follow up appointments as needed for 6 weeks.

The difference between manual therapy and traditional physical therapy is often times misunderstood. Manual therapy is a distinct sub-category of physical therapy. Physical therapists who practice manual therapy generally have significant advanced training in hands-on joint mobilization and manipulation techniques. The tech-

niques used by manual physical therapists are designed to improve joint function through specific passive movements of the joint. The goals are to improve joint play (accessory movement), effect specific joint receptors to modify neurological muscle tone, and to re-educate proper physiologic motion of the joint.

Traditional physical therapy utilizes stretches, strengthening exercises, massage, and modalities such as heat, ice and ultrasound to address orthopedic disorders.

Now...back to the study. The researchers found that after 7 weeks, group 1 (manual therapy) had a success rate of 68.3%. Group 2 (tradition P.T only) had a success rate of 50.8% Group 3 (M.D. continued care) had only a 35.9% success rate.

These results indicate that patients who have neck pain would have double the chance of success if they would have manual therapy treatment of their pain.

Now my 2 cents.....  
This study did not say much

about the cause of the neck pain which goes a long way in determining what type of treatment will be most successful. In addition, the therapists who performed the manual therapy were not allowed to utilize traditional therapy, and the traditional therapy group received no manual therapy. This works well for research, but obviously, is not the best treatment approach.

The best approach is clearly a combination of manual and traditional physical therapy. At M & M Physical Therapy, we always look for the cause of neck pain, in addition to addressing the symptoms. The symptoms can generally be managed with manual therapy techniques and the cause of the pain can then be addressed with manual treatment as well as postural re-education exercises and traditional modalities.

Both Melissa and Larry have been through extensive training in manual therapy beyond their Physical Therapy degrees. If you are living with neck pain, give us a call for a free neck pain screening. We will help you determine the cause, and outline treatment options for you.

## Choosing a Mattress

Buying a new mattress is an important decision. I can't even guess on the number of people who ask us for our recommendation on picking out a new one. It is generally accepted that people who are having low back pain would benefit from a firm mattress. However, the best mattress for you is an entirely personal choice. My impression is that if you are expecting complete relief of back pain just from changing mattresses, you will be "sorely" mistaken. A comfortable mattress can certainly help considerably, but you have to address the cause of your back problem as well—and that cause is generally more complex than a bad mattress.

That being said, here are a couple of considerations for you.

- ◆ Different back problems may respond better to specific types of mattresses and/or sleep positions. Contact your physical therapist to discuss *your* back.
- ◆ What works well for one person, may not work well for another.
- ◆ There are very few scientific studies on mattresses, and those that have been done are inconclusive.

When shopping for a mattress, please take lots of time—at least 30 minutes to lay on the mattress in the store. While you may feel silly doing that, 1-2 minutes is clearly not enough time to see how your back will respond. Also, some mattress manufacturers offer a sleep guarantee. The plans differ for different companies, but they are worth looking into. They generally offer a to take the mattress back after a few nights if you don't find it to your liking. You have to be sure to ask about the specifics—like who pays for the delivery/pickup, etc. If the costs are not too high, it nice to have the opportunity to sleep on your new mattress for a few nights, before you are stuck with it.

Your mattress is not the only factor if you are having pain and difficulty sleeping.

Others include:

- ◆ Medication and side effects
- ◆ Irregular sleep patterns

- ◆ Caffeine/alcohol/tobacco use
- ◆ Sleep Apnea
- ◆ Anxiety/stress

If you are considering a new mattress, feel free to call us if you would like an opinion regarding your back pain.

## Exercise of the Month

The Abdominal Curl – Up: As we approach summer people start to think about their bathing suits and the first exercise that comes to mind is crunches. There are many ways to strengthen your abdominals. My least favorite is the crunch. It's a non-functional movement, and it has the potential to cause harm—especially in people with low back problems. If you have a back condition, please consult your physical therapist before doing any exercises. Now, if you must do a sit-up type exercise, please do it this way. The curl up is simple, and if done correctly, it will work for anyone—from the pro athlete to the couch potato. Do not lock your feet under anything—this just encourages you to use your hip muscles rather than your abdominals. The most important thing is the starting position. As you can see in the first picture, you must start with your low back completely flat. The movement is then to simply raise your shoulder blades off the floor—and that's it. Do not fully flex your spine—only enough to clear your shoulder blades. You can use your arms to cradle your head, but do not pull on your neck with your hands. If your shoulders do not allow this, then cross your arms over your chest. Maintain a neutral neck by looking at the ceiling and imagine that you are holding an orange under your chin that you cannot crush.



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## This Month's Recipes

### Chicken Fruit Salad

- 16 oz. uncooked small shell pasta
- 6 cups cubed cooked chicken
- 3 cups sliced celery
- 3 cups seedless red or green grapes, halved
- 2 (15 oz.) cans mandarin oranges
- 2/3 cup cashew pieces
- 1 1/2 cups mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/1/2 cups whipping cream, whipped
- 1. Cook pasta to desired doneness as directed on package. Drain: rinse with cold water.
- 2. In large bowl, combine pasta and all remaining ingredients except whipped cream: toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate.
- 3. Just before serving, fold in whipped cream. Store in refrigerator.



Bon A petit'. Here are a couple of tasty treats that will be available at our picnic. There is one healthy choice, and one to work off at the gym!

### Gorp Bars

1. 2 cups of corn chex
2. 2 1/2 cup thin pretzels sticks
3. 1 bag of M & M or chocolate chips
4. 1 Cup peanuts
5. 3/4 cup of raisins (optional because Larry doesn't like)
6. 1/2 cup butter
7. 1/3 cup peanut butter
8. 10 oz marshmallows

Mix 1st five ingredients in a bowl and set aside. Melt butter, peanut butter, and marshmallows in a pan and mix with other 5 ingredients. Press into a greased 9 x 13 pan. Let stand till firm.