Finding the Best Fibromyalgia Resources

by ANGELA FINLAY

Top Websites, Videos, and Books for Fibromyalgia Sufferers

Chronic pain is a very personal challenge, and every sufferer has to fight fibromyalgia in their own way.

However, that doesn't mean you're on your own all the time, and while it's up to you to reach out and investigate resources, there are plenty of helping hands at the ready.

The best way to stay in physical and emotional control of your illness is with a range of resources – fibro news, social support, and tips for daily management – that are both convenient and accurate.

News and Info on Fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia research is gaining momentum, and there are more places to go for breaking news and helpful reference than ever before. Here are a few sites notable for their depth, accessibility, and up-to-date information.

National Fibromyalgia and Chronic Pain Association

Like many fibro info sites, this one covers everything from medical resources to financial issues. However, NFMCPA is particularly well organized and proactive: as a non-profit organization, they use their huge audience and top-notch fundraising to advocate for fibro patients, and keep the community informed with a variety of online literature.

The site also focus on the relationship between fibromyalgia and other chronic syndromes, since these connections are responsible for a lot of the discomfort and challenge.

Fibromyalgia Network

Fibromyalgia Network is a fantastic place to go for general fibro news, plus there's a host of specific tools to help you expand your knowledge. The annual membership fee of $28 may seem steep, but you can order the free info packet first to help you decide if it's right for you.

Aside from the *Fibromyalgia Network Journal* and eNews alerts, you can take advantage of their database of updated referral listings and health care providers for each state.

Fibromyalgia Information Foundation

Hosted and administered by doctors, the Fibromyalgia Information Foundation is dedicated to keeping patients informed and participating in their fibro care. Proactive patients can download and watch lectures from previous conferences, or simply browse the useful videos on good stretching, exercise, and relaxation techniques. Plug your name and info into the database to get info on upcoming research studies, too.

Social Support

Chronic pain is isolating, and the danger of that is clear: the less support you have, the easier it is to lose confidence in yourself, and give in to your disease. Luckily, the more connected the world becomes, the easier it is to build good support systems filled with people who understand your perspective.

If you are not able to attend a support group in person, don't fret – there are plenty of online forums and communities to help you get answers, share stories, and gain comfort and confidence.

Daily Strength

Daily Strength hosts a particularly well-organized and well-attended fibro group, where you can join in or start a thread of discussion on a huge range of fibro-related topics. There's also a fairly sizeable repository of info, and even some medical experts on hand to answer your tough questions.

Next page: two more social support resources, plus some great nutrition and exercise resources.

Social Support

Living with Fibro

A very strong and welcoming online community, LivingWithFibro pledges to help its members (and fibro sufferers in general) stay positive and in control of their life. Filled with uplifting resources and quick links to helpful conversations, the site is as easy to use as it is thorough.

Plus, you can begin your own page on the site once you become a member, which will help you to truly feel a part of the community.

Men with Fibro

Between 80% and 90% of fibromyalgia patients are women, which means a lot of information is targeted to a woman's lifestyle and specific set of issues. Unfortunately, that leaves thousands of men feeling left out of the discussion.

Men living with fibromyalgia – and those who know a male fibro sufferer – can visit a site designed to inform, empower and give voice to men with fibromyalgia. The Men with Fibro site is a little bit haphazard in design, but there is some helpful info to check out.

Nutrition and Exercise for Fibro Management

How you choose to nourish your body is a big part of your chronic pain management, and that includes healthy activity and helpful compensation as well as nutritious food.

Your doctor is a great starting point, but it's up to you to keep up your commitments to a healthy lifestyle each and every day. These resources will help you stay on track:

To Your Health

If you take nutritional supplements to complement your fibro treatment, this mail-order site can make it easier to buy them.

Learn about the different products with research-backed reference articles on the To Your Health website, and you can also sign up for their quarterly newsletter. It will cost you $25 a year, but the newsletter keeps you up-to-date on latest supplement research and advancements, which can help improve your self-care (and keep you

safe).

OHSU Fibromyalgia Exercise DVDs

Developed by the Oregon Health and Science University research group to improve exercise techniques and programs for fibro patients, these DVDs are the gold standard for fibromyalgia exercise.

Directed by Dr. Robert Bennett and Dr. Kim Dupree-Jones, there are four videos that lead you through different exercise routines: yoga and pilates, stretching and relaxation, strength and balance, and aerobic exercise. Getting active and staying motivated can be challenging, but a good guide can make it a lot easier.

Building Your Fibro Library

The web has certainly taken over the information trade in recent years, and that means it's really easy to get a load of information whenever you happen to need it.

On the other hand, there's a lot of information out there that is unfounded, or personal opinions masquerading as facts. In order to take better control of your condition, you need to separate fact from fiction.

One tried and true way to gather accurate information is through books. Printed material tends to go through a pretty rigorous editing process before it's published, and that's good news for a patient.

However, the mysteries of fibromyalgia are constantly being investigated, and studies continue to clear up misunderstandings, which means old books may not be as helpful anymore.

In the end, good, solid reference material is never a bad investment, so look to new editions of trusted chronic pain books to keep on your shelf of fibromyalgia resources – you can ask your doctor or therapist for recommendations before you hit the bookstore.