6 Potential Causes of Fibromyalgia Foot Pain

by MARIANNE BROWN

What to Know About Fibromyalgia Foot Pain

I am sure you already aware that pain is heightened for individuals with fibromyalgia. An oversensitive nervous system ramps up pain signals to certain areas of the body. This is why fibromyalgia foot pain may occur.

Fibromyalgia pain can feel like an all over flu-like type pain and muscular-type pain. Predominantly, it affects the neck, shoulders, back and sometimes the larger muscles in the legs. Many people with fibromyalgia also experience pain in their feet.

Types of Foot Pain

According to Fibromyalgia-symptoms.org, there have been several studies conducted in to link fibromyalgia to other conditions, which may present with foot pain:

- **Plantar fasciitis:** This type of pain is often found in active people, such as runners and athletes. It is also found in older people who are on their feet a lot.
- **Morton's neuroma:** This is a growth of tissue that has developed over the nerves of the feet into the toes, causing inflammation and pain upon using your foot.
- **Metatarsalgia:** This is inflammation of the metatarsals of the foot. It feels like a burning, sharp or aching in the ball of the foot, around the larger toes, or big toe. I get this often.

Like other painful conditions, such at the ones listed above, having fibromyalgia can make these conditions even more painful.

Potential Causes of Fibromyalgia Foot Pain

There are a number of possible lifestyle reasons as to why we feel pain in our feet, with fibromyalgia:

- **Lack of sleep:** Poor quality sleep, can cause us to be even more over sensitized to pain. We need a good seven to eight hours sleep a night to function well. Restless legs (inability to keep still) can also keep us awake.
- **A lot of standing:** If you spend much of your time on your feet, maybe due to your work, this can put extra pressure on your lower limbs and feet, causing swelling and pain.
- **Walking for long periods:** This is when I get foot pain, if I take a longer walks than normal. The following day, my feet and big toes hurt.
- **Being overweight:** Carrying more weight for your height can cause your lower body to be under more pressure. This can cause an increase in swelling and pain.
- **Immobility:** If you spend more time resting than moving, often when you do undertake an activity, this can cause more pain in your body (in particular in your lower limbs and feet). This happens because you are not used to moving around.

- **The shoes you wear:** I have not worn heels since I had my first back surgery, they cause me pain in my feet, right up through my legs, back and neck. Does your foot pain increase after wearing certain shoes?

There are also other pain-causing conditions that can cause foot pain:

- Rheumatoid arthritis.
- Lupus.
- Reynaud’s syndrome.

As a consequence, foot pain may restrict the amount of time you stand. Therefore, when you do, you might be walking differently, which can lead to back, hip, knee and foot problems.

According to Fibromyalgiaresources.com and research led by Ginevra Liptan, M.D., one possible cause of fibromyalgia foot pain could be inflammation of the fascia, a tiny layer of connective tissue that runs through our entire body.

Studies are still unsure at whether fibromyalgia specifically causes foot pain, or whether it is down to our pain sensitivity.

Approaches for Reducing Foot Pain

I personally think there are two groups of strategies to deal with pain in specific areas: the direct and indirect approach.

Direct Approach

The direct approach includes techniques and products specifically aimed at the feet.

Soft-Soled Footwear

Providing full support for your feet is a must and you should feel comfortable. Avoid heels if you get foot pain. If you prefer shoes with height, try wedges. I find these to be more comfortable.

Thick, Comfy Socks

I love these. I wear these around the house and to fill out my winter boots. They also cushion the feet and keep them warm.

Epsom Salt Soak

Magnesium flakes are absorbed through the skin, therefore using these in a foot soak would work as well as a bath. A foot spa is relaxing and helps comfort sore feet. The heat also warms up cold feet.

Orthotics

If regular shoes do not quite cut it, there are special shoe and heel inserts that are custom made to fit the size of your feet. Not only are they customizable, but they are made to fit your foot pain needs?

Visit a Podiatrist

This medical expert specializes in conditions of the feet and they investigate any potential conditions that could be causing you pain. They will conduct a physical examination of your feet and may undertake image methods, such as X-rays, a bone scan or MRI. This can help identify potential arthritis, damage or injury.

Reflexology

This is a form of massage that includes applying various types of pressure to the feet, hands and ears. It is based on a theory that certain parts of the feet are connected to certain organs and systems, such as the nervous and endocrine systems, promoting relaxation and calming the nervous system. This can be beneficial to people with fibromyalgia. Please do guide the reflexologist on how much pressure to use. I am extremely ticklish on my feet, but I can handle gentle pressure point techniques.

Indirect Approach

An indirect approach includes techniques and lifestyle changes that could impact the feet.

Losing Weight

The closer you are to your ideal weight for your height and sex, the less pressure that is pressing on your lower body. This reduces potential swelling and takes the pressure of your hips, knees, ankles and feet.

Gentle Exercise

Daily exercise is critical for good health. Not only will it help you maintain a healthy weight, it can reduce stress, strengthen your muscles and help to reduce pain. All this can filter down into your feet.

Massage

I absolutely love massage, but I have to be honest, I personally find a foot massage painful. Therefore, I skip this. I find that very gentle massage in the areas above my feet, such as the legs and ankles, relieves stiffness and pain in my feet.