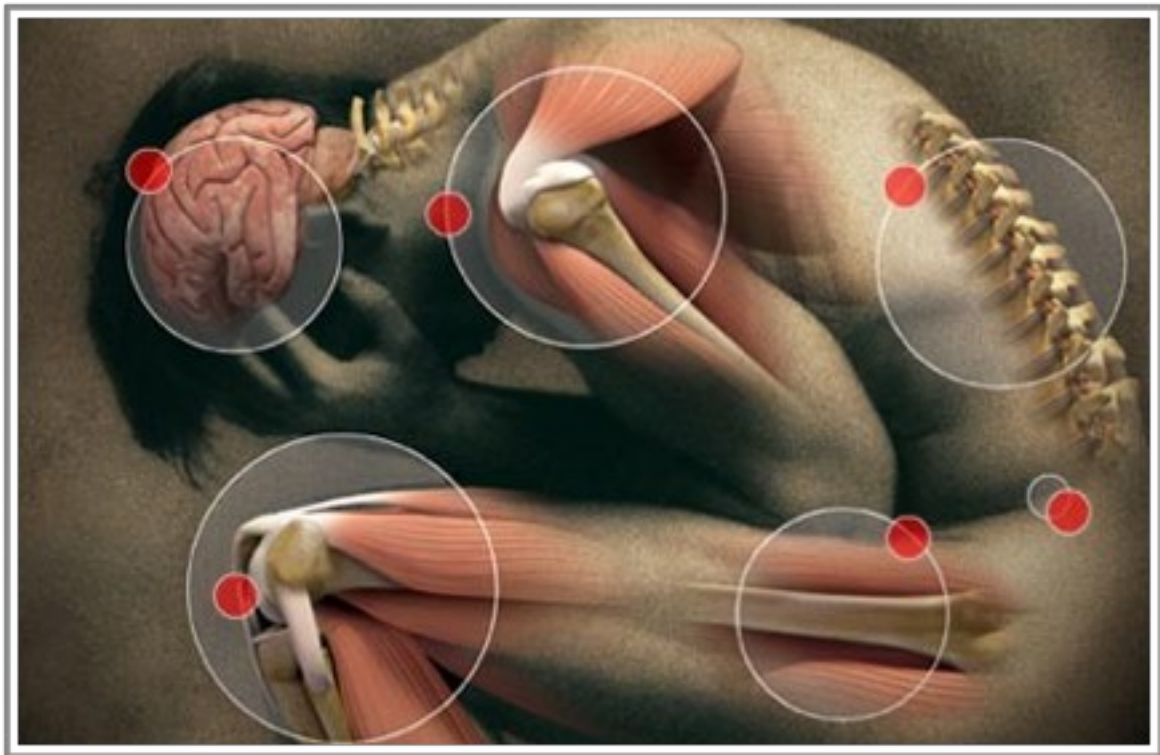


Fibromyalgia and Yoga Therapy

Heaven Studio Term Paper



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Fibromyalgia and Yoga Therapy: A Research Paper

Description and condition according to medical view

Fibromyalgia is a condition with a somewhat mysterious or unidentifiable medical explanation for onset. It is characterised by its symptoms, which seem to be almost limitless in number, and by the fact that it does not influence mortality; however, the symptoms of fibromyalgia can severely restrict and compromise an individual from full engagement in life.

"Fibromyalgia is a medical disorder characterised by chronic widespread pain and allodynia, a heightened and painful response to pressure."¹ It was at one time thought to be a musculoskeletal or a neuropsychiatric condition. However, recent research evidence indicates it may be a central nervous system disorder. While it is most prevalent in women 75-90% of the time, it occurs in men and children and all ethnic groups. Often times it is seen in families (mothers, daughters and siblings) and between the ages of 20-50 with incidences increasing with age.²

According to the National Fibromyalgia Association, "Fibromyalgia, which has also been referred to as *fibromyositis* and *fibrositis*, is characterised by chronic widespread pain, multiple tender points, abnormal pain processing, sleep disturbances, fatigue, and often psychological distress."

Causes of condition according to medical view

It is more accurate to describe fibromyalgia as a syndrome (fibromyalgia syndrome, FMS) than a disease because at this time a clear, identifiable cause for its occurrence has not been found. However, there are theories supported by research that the syndrome is the interplay of biological, psychological and socio-cultural factors. Because close family members will sometimes develop the disorder, it is thought to have a genetic component as well. Biological factors are the result of a hyper-aroused nervous system due to abnormal pain processing in the central nervous system. The ab-

1 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/fibromyalgia

2 fmaware.org/site/pageserver6cc.html?pagename=fibromyalgia_affected

normal pain processing is due to elevated levels of a few particular neurotransmitters, and the lack of other neurotransmitters involved in the body's pain process.

"The first report on significantly elevated levels of the neurotransmitter substance P (SP) in fibromyalgia patients was published in 1988, and others have found levels of SP that are two to three times higher in fibromyalgia patients than in normal control groups. Nerve growth factor (NGF), a facilitator of SP, was shown to be four times higher in fibromyalgia patients than in healthy controls. Another powerful neurotransmitter involved in pain processing, glutamate, was elevated in fibromyalgia subjects compared to healthy controls."³

Current research supports that FMS sufferers also lack neurotransmitters that dampen pain. "Studies reveal lower CSF [cerebral spinal fluid] levels of serotonin, norepinephrine, and dopamine, all neuro-modulators involved in antinociception, the neurological process that would normally inhibit pain awareness."⁴

People with fibromyalgia therefore, must contend with a combination of factors that expresses itself as a pained nervous system: on one end, neurotransmitters that make them hyper aware of pain; and on the other, a lack of pain-inhibiting neurotransmitters.

Heightened stress arousal triggered by an event or chronic stress can be the instigator in a person whose biology is already susceptible. FMS sufferers generally have a history of depression, anxiety disorders, post traumatic stress disorder, and/or obsessive compulsive disorder. ⁵ Interestingly, the same neurotransmitter abnormalities in FMS are experienced by many other psychological disorders such as major depression and anxiety disorders.

The manner in which an individual copes with pain can determine the socio-cultural component of FMS. "The ability to cope with pain may be influenced by events in childhood such as child abuse or living with a parent who coped poorly with chronic pain. Other sociocultural factors include the degree to which it is socially acceptable to express pain, whether family members encourage or discourage the individual to push past pain, and whether there is some benefit to the individual for being disabled by pain (e.g., monetary disability payments, attention from family members, successful litigation from an accident.)"⁶

3 iayt.metapress.com/content/ah8r9t4x57p6247p/full_text.pdf

4 Ibid

5 actabiomedica.it/data/2007/2_2007/fietta.pdf

6 medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/fibromyalgia

Signs and symptoms of fibromyalgia according to the medical view

There is no definitive list of symptoms of fibromyalgia, as it varies from person to person. However there are some signs that will help inform a doctor's decision to test for the syndrome.

Today, an individual that experiences constant, dull muscular ache in the entire body, on both sides and above and below the waist, for a period of three months or more, is often times a candidate for a fibromyalgia diagnosis. A general practitioner can test the patient for FMS using the survey instruments provisionally approved by the America College of Rheumatology in 2010, as there isn't a specific blood test.** A patient will receive a diagnosis of fibromyalgia if she/he scores high on the The Wide Spread Pain (WPI) index and the Symptom Severity (SS) scale, the symptoms have been present for least three months, and no other disorder can explain the symptomatology.⁷

Below is a brief outline of what the Wide Spread Pain Index (WPI) and Symptom Severity scale measure.

WPI:

Note the number of areas (below) in which the patient has had pain over the last week. In how many areas has the patient had pain? Score will be between 0 and 19.

Shoulder girdle, left; Hip (buttock, trochanter), left; Jaw, left; Upper back; Shoulder girdle, right; Hip (buttock, trochanter), right; Jaw, right; Lower back; Upper arm, left; Upper leg, left; Chest;

⁷ <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/05/100524143427.htm>

**Before 2010, a patient was diagnosed with fibromyalgia if she/he experienced muscular pain throughout their body for three months or longer, experienced moderate pain and tenderness in 11 of the 18 tender points thought to be associated with this syndrome, and did not have another disorder to explain the pain. A provisory diagnosis procedure has replaced it due to the fact that many doctors incorrectly administer the tender points exam, it didn't take common symptoms such as fatigue or lack of mental clarity into account, an inherent gender bias using this diagnosis exists as men often do not feel the severity of pain the same way women do; nor did it take into account the fleeting nature of pain symptoms and its changing quality. The diagnosis procedure will no longer be *provisional* once "the criteria set has been quantitatively validated using patient data... [and] validation based on an external data set. All ACR-approved criteria sets are expected to undergo intermittent updates." <http://www.fibroaction.org/Pages/New-Diagnostic-Criteria-for-Fibromyalgia.aspx>

Neck; Upper arm, right; Upper leg, right; Abdomen; Lower arm, left; Lower leg, left; Lower arm, right; Lower leg, right.

SS scale score:

Fatigue, Waking unrefreshed, Cognitive symptoms

For each of the 3 symptoms above, indicate the level of severity over the past week using the following scale:

0 = no problem

1 = slight or mild problems, generally mild or intermittent

2 = moderate, considerable problems, often present and/or at a moderate level

3 = severe: pervasive, continuous, life-disturbing problems

Considering somatic symptoms in general, indicate whether the patient has:*

0 = no symptoms

1 = few symptoms

2 = a moderate number of symptoms

3 = a great deal of symptoms

The SS scale score is the sum of the severity of the 3 symptoms (fatigue, waking unrefreshed, cognitive symptoms) plus the extent (severity) of somatic symptoms* in general. The final score is between 0 and 12.

(*Somatic symptoms that might be considered: muscle pain, irritable bowel syndrome, fatigue/tiredness, thinking or remembering problem, muscle weakness, headache, pain/cramps in the abdomen, numbness/tingling, dizziness, insomnia, depression, constipation, pain in the upper abdomen, nausea, nervousness, chest pain, blurred vision, fever, diarrhea, dry mouth, itching, wheezing, Raynaud's phenomenon, hives/welts, ringing in ears, vomiting, heartburn, oral ulcers, loss of/change in taste, seizures, dry eyes, shortness of breath, loss of appetite, rash, sun sensitivity, hearing difficulties, easy bruising, hair loss, frequent urination, painful urination, and bladder spasms.)⁸

8 <http://www.fibroaction.org/Pages/New-Diagnostic-Criteria-for-Fibromyalgia.aspx>

A comprehensive list of symptoms follows:

AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM/EN- DOCRINE/IMMUNE/HORMONE

Abnormal sensitivity to hot or cold
Allergies (nasal, other; new, increased or worsening)
Canker sores (frequent)
Chills and/or shakes when hungry (may occur instead of feeling hungry)
Cold hands and feet
Feeling hot or cold often
Flu-like symptoms, on-going or recurrent after initial gradual or acute onset; includes mild fever (99.5-101.5 F / 37.5-38.6 C), chills, extreme fatigue after minimal exertion
Hair loss (alopecia)
Herpes simplex or shingles rash
Increased susceptibility to infections
Low-grade fevers
Low blood pressure (below 110/70)
Low body temperature (below 97.5)
Lymph nodes painful, swollen (in neck; under arms)
Night sweats (not related to menopause or fever)
Orthostatic Intolerance (neurally mediated hypotension)
Reactive hypoglycaemia and insulin resistance
Thirst, increased
Temperature irregularities; often feeling hot or cold irrespective of actual ambient temperature and body temperature; low body temperature (below 97.6 F / 36.4 C)
Thyroid inflammation (acute thyroiditis; hypothyroidism; Hashimoto's thyroiditis)

CARDIOPULMONARY/RESPIRAT- ORY/CIRCULATORY

Cardiac abnormalities (mitral valve prolapse; myocarditis; tachycardia; palpitations; dysrhythmia)
Cough
Dyspnea (out of breath) or shortness of breath (air hunger) after minimal or no exertion
Heart attack
Heart palpitations
Heart pounds so hard it shakes body, bed
Pulse skips

Serious rhythm disturbances of heart
Sighing, frequent, not related to mental/emotional state
Stroke
Vasculitis

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CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM/NEUROLOGICAL/NEUROPATHIC/OTOLOGICAL

Abnormal CAT, MRI and/or SPECT scans
Alcohol intolerance
Aseptic meningitis
"Brainfog"; inability to think clearly
Difficulty moving tongue to speak
Diminished or absent reflexes
Fainting or blackouts; feeling like you might faint
Headaches (frequent, severe, recurring)
Hearing fluctuations (sounds fade then return)
Hearing changes, often from day to day (need to turn up, then down, volume of radio, TV)
Joint or arthritic pain not relieved by NSAIDs (ie, ibuprofen)
Libido (decreased)
Light-headedness, feeling spaced-out
Migraine headaches
Muscle twitching
Noise intolerance
Paralysis or severe weakness of limb
Parasthesias (numbness, tingling, crawling, itching sensations) in face, head, torso, extremities
Photosensitivity
Radiculitis
Seizures; seizure-like episodes
Sensory alterations (hyper- or hyposensitivity) - smell, taste, hearing (noise intolerance)
Severe muscle weakness
Syncope (fainting)
Tinnitus (ringing/noises in one or both ears)
Touch or weight of clothing on or against body causes discomfort or pain
Tremors, trembling

COGNITIVE FUNCTION

Becoming lost in familiar locations when driving
Difficulty with simple calculations (e.g., balancing checkbook)
Difficulty expressing ideas in words
Difficulty moving your mouth to speak
Difficulty making decisions
Difficulty following directions while driving
Difficulty remembering names of objects
Difficulty remembering names of people
Difficulty recognizing faces
Difficulty following simple written instructions
Difficulty following complicated written instructions
Difficulty following simple oral (spoken) instructions
Difficulty following complicated oral (spoken) instructions
Difficulty integrating information (putting ideas together to form a complete picture or concept)
Difficulty putting tasks or things in proper sequence
Difficulty paying attention
Difficulty following a conversation when background noise is present
Difficulty making and/or retrieving memories (long/short-term memory deficits)
Difficulty understanding what you read
Easily distracted during a task
Feeling too disoriented to drive
Forgetting how to do routine things
Forgetting the use of common objects (such as, what to do with the shampoo when you are standing in the shower)
Forgetting how to get to familiar places
Impaired ability to concentrate
Losing your train of thought in the middle of a sentence
Losing track in the middle of a task (remembering what to do next)
Poor judgment
Switching left and right
Slowed and/or slurred speech
Stuttering; stammering
Transposition (reversal) of numbers, words and/or letters when you speak and/or speak
Word-finding difficulty

DIGESTIVE/HEPATIC

Bloating; intestinal gas

Decreased appetite
Digestive chemicals (acid, enzymes) reduced or absent
Esophageal reflux; heartburn
Frequent constipation
Frequent diarrhea
Food cravings (especially carbohydrates, sweets)
Food/Substance intolerance
IBS
Liver function impaired; mild abnormalities
Increased appetite
Nausea
Spleen tender or enlarged
Stomach ache, cramps
Vomiting
Weight gain or loss

EQUILIBRIUM/PERCEPTION

Bite your cheeks or tongue frequently
Bump into things frequently
Difficulty discriminating printed matter despite proper vision correction
Distances (difficulty judging when driving; when putting things down on surfaces)
Dizziness or vertigo
Dropping things frequently
Dysequilibrium (balance problems)
Impaired coordination
Loss of balance when standing with eyes closed
Perception (not quite seeing what you are looking at)
Some patterns (stripes, checks) cause dizziness
Spatial disorientation
Staggering gait (clumsy walking)
Words on printed page appear to jump off page or disappear when staring at them

EYES/VISION

Acuity changes not related to prescription changes
Blind spots
Blurred vision
Conjunctivitis
Diminished visual acuity in absence of actual vision change
Drooping eyelid
Double vision
Eye pain
Flashes of light perceived peripherally
Optic neuritis or atrophy

Oscillopsia (image jiggles)
Prescription changes more frequently
Pressure sensation behind eyes
Red and/or tearing eyes
Retinal damage
Slowed accommodation (switching focus from far to near, near to far)
Spots or floaters not related to migraines
Swelling around eyes
Uveitis and/or iritis
Wandering or lazy eye

HEAD/NECK/MOUTH

Bell's palsy (facial paralysis, one or both sides)
Bruxism (grinding/clenching teeth)
Canker sores
Dizziness when you turn your head or move
Dry chronic cough
Dry eyes, nose and mouth (sicca syndrome)
Pain in ears, palate, gums
Periodontal disease
Prickling pain along skin of jaw
Problems swallowing, chewing
Runny nose in absence of cold, allergies
Sinus infections
Sore spot on the top of your head
Temperomandibular Joint Syndrome (TMJ)
Unexplained toothaches
Xerostoma (dry mouth)

MUSCULOSKELETAL

Arthritic pain that migrates from joint to joint
Carpal tunnel syndrome
Frozen shoulder
Intermittent joint swelling
Joint aches (arthralgia)
Joint pain, without redness or swelling
Loss of tone
"Lumpy, bumpy" long muscles
Morning stiffness
Muscle aches (myalgia)
Muscle pain, stiffness, weakness
Piriform muscle syndrome
Reduced range of motion
Stiff neck
Writing causes pain in hand, arm shoulder

PAIN SYMPTOMS

Abdominal pain
Chest pain
Generalized pain
Joint Pain
Pain that migrates from joint to joint

Pain/stiffness at C1-C2 (top two vertebrae)
*** Shooting or stabbing pains ****

PSYCHOLOGICAL

SYMPTOMS/MOOD/EMOTIONS

Abrupt/Unpredictable mood swings
Anxiety or fear for no obvious reason
Appetite increase/decrease
Decreased self-esteem
Depression or depressed mood
Feeling helpless and/or hopeless
Feeling worthless
Frequent crying for no reason
Helpless/Hopeless feelings
Inability to enjoy previously enjoyed activities
Irritability; over-reaction
New phobias/irrational fears
Panic attacks
Personality changes (labile, irritable, anxious, confused, forgetful)
Phobias (irrational fears)
Rage attacks; anger outbursts for little or no reason
Suicidal thoughts or suicide attempts

SENSITIVITIES

Acute or abnormal reactions to medications
Alteration in taste, smell, and/or hearing
Chemicals (alcohol, medications; lower tolerance for)
Food sensitivities
Increased perception of and sensitivity to noise
Light sensitivity
Sensitivity to odors (able to detect and/or react in concentrations far lower than before and that healthy people cannot smell)

NOISE sensitivities

SKIN/NAILS

Abnormal scarring
Acrodermatitis Chronica Atrophicans
Blotchy or mottled skin
Bruise easily
Bruises may take longer to appear, and/or longer to fade
Bull's-eye (Erythema migrans) on light skin (resembles a bruise on dark skin)
Dermographia (minor scratch pressure on skin leaves vivid red welts)
Dry, itchy skin
Easily scar
Eczema or psoriasis

Fragile nails
Frequent skin irritations
Lymphadenosis benigna cutis
Nails that curve under or downward
Overgrowing connective tissue (ingrown hair, adhesions, thickened/split cuticles, cysts, fibroids)
Painful skin (abnormal/excessive pain when scratched or rubbed)
"Paper" skin (feels fragile, tissue-thin when rubbed)
Rashes on body, face
Vertical ridges or beads in nails

SLEEP SYMPTOMS

Abnormal brain activity in stage 4 sleep
Altered sleep/wake patterns (alert/energetic late at night, sleepy during day)
Difficulty falling asleep
Difficulty staying asleep (frequent and/or prolonged awakenings)
Hypersomnia (excessive sleeping)
Myclonus (restless leg syndrome; occasional jerking of entire body)
Nightmares (frequent, extremely vivid and/or disturbing)
Unrefreshing/Non-restorative sleep

UROGENITAL/REPRODUCTIVE

Decreased libido
Discharge from breast or galactorrhea
Endometriosis
Frequent urination
Incontinence
Impotence
Infant: premature; low birth weight; low muscle tone; failure to thrive
Interstitial cystitis
Miscarriage or stillbirth
Painful intercourse
Painful urination or bladder
Pelvic and/or rectal pain
Prostate pain
Swollen testicles
Other symptoms worsen before start of menstruation
Worsening of PMS

OTHER

Abnormal or other changes in sweating
Activity level reduced to less than 50% of pre-onset level
Burning sensation (internal or external)

Changed voice
Changes in sweat odor/body odor
Delayed reaction to overactivity/exertion (onset 24-48 hours after exertion)
Electromagnetic (EM) sensitivity (electrical storms, full moon, affect function of electrical devices)
Fatigue, prolonged, disabling, made worse by exertion or stress
Fibrocystic breasts
"Gallop" cholesterol and triglycerides
Hair loss (not related to age, hormones, diet, medication)
Hands hurt excessively when put in cold water
Handwriting changes, altering signature and/or other writing
Hoarseness
Painful, weak grasp that gives way/lets go
Periods of concentrated thinking causes physical and mental exhaustion, increases pain
Sore throat
Swelling/Idiopathic edema (fluid retention syndrome)
Symptoms worsened by extremes of temperature (hot, cold), stress, and/or air travel
Symptoms change focus from time to time, like infection is moving through the body
Thickened mucus secretions (nose, bowel, vaginal)
Thickened "sleep" around eyes in mornings
Very attractive to biting flies and mosquitoes
Weight changes (usually gain) ⁹

⁹ http://www.fibromyalgia-symptoms.org/forums/fibromyalgia_general_discussion/comprehensive_list_of_fibromyalgia_symptoms/

Despite the long list of symptoms above, it is not likely that a patient will experience every symptom.

Common Medical Treatment for Condition

As of this current date, there is not a medical treatment for fibromyalgia, only for the symptoms. Considering the vast symptomatology of FMS there are many medications to assist in alleviating discomfort, and that can assist those suffering to continue to live a fully functioning life.

However, the most common symptoms and their treatments include:

Painful muscles and joints	Ibuprofen, muscle relaxants, anti-convulsants, mild exercise
Lack of sleep, 'fibro-fog'	Sleep medication, establishing better sleep hygiene
Anxiety, depression	Tricyclic antidepressants, selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors (SSRIs)

Three medications are FDA-approved for the specific treatment of fibromyalgia:

Cymbalta (duloxetine): a type of antidepressant called a serotonin and norepinephrine re-uptake inhibitor (SNRI). Researchers aren't sure how Cymbalta works in fibromyalgia, but they think that increasing levels of serotonin and norepinephrine help control and reduce feelings of pain.

Lyrica (pregabalin): Lyrica is a nerve pain and epilepsy drug. In people with fibromyalgia, it may help calm down overly sensitive nerve cells that send pain signals throughout the body. It has been effective in treating fibro pain.

Savella (milnacipran): Savella is also an SNRI. While researchers aren't exactly sure how it works, studies have shown that it helps relieve pain and reduce fatigue in people with fibromyalgia.¹⁰

¹⁰ <http://www.webmd.com/fibromyalgia/fibromyalgia-pain-10/fibromyalgia-creating-treatment-plan>

Yoga Therapy View

Yoga Therapy (YT) breaks down an illness or disease, or in this case a syndrome, by investigating not just the physical body but the subtle body as well. Yogic wisdom defines the basic components of reality and our experience of it by various names: Koshas, Chakras, or Elements of Nature; these systems of investigation have the similar purpose of *studying reality, the acceptance of reality, as well -meditating on the contributing causes of suffering.*

Yoga Cosmology has an ancient history. The study of the universe and our place in it lies in the Classical tradition of yoga. Yogis perceived that virtually everything that exists, seen or unseen, physical or mental, has a subtle inner structure. Samkya yoga philosophy describes the relationship between spirit and matter by listing all various elements and characteristics. For example, Samkya identifies five sheaths or koshas (coverings), which are ever more dense layers around spirit.¹¹ Koshas fold into one another, moving from gross to more subtle layers and are seen as the coverings that obscure the knowledge of the True Self. They serve to better understand the workings and interactions of perception, consciousness, feeling, breathing and physiology within the human structure.

In Tantra yogic philosophy, the belief is the physical universe is made up of five great substances/elements (*Pancha mahabhutas*; or *Tattvas* in Kashmiri Shaivism and Samkhya):

Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Ether.

As well, each kosha is represented by elements of nature, for the Law of Complementarity states: 'as above, we are below' meaning that what exists in the Universe, exists in us. "The whole world is inside, says the poet Kabir. All seven oceans are inside, and hundreds of millions of stars. Through the penetration of our own internal sheaths, we also penetrate the sheaths of the universe."¹²

"Chakras are the way in which the five elements organise themselves in a living being to create life (with the help of prana) ...They are an interface between mind, body and spirit. They are related to physical structures where consciousness 'plugs' into the body."¹³ The ability to move closer to the wheel, to resonate with the elements directly created by their vibrations is to become a witnessing consciousness.

"The aim of the yoga path is to recognise suffering in its various manifestations and conditions and to cultivate the skills necessary to bring suffering to an end."¹⁴ YT investigates dis-ease by breaking down reality and the sources of suffering and pain through sheaths of yogic reality, by balancing the elements and, by balancing the spinning chakra wheels. From the yoga therapy perspective, Fibromyalgia can be understood through these systems of investigation.

11 Copyright Karen Claffey, Heaven On Earth Institute, Yoga Philosophy, pg 6.

12 "The Wisdom of Yoga", Stephen Cope, Bantam Books, pg 243.

13 Copyright Kristine Kaoverii, Heaven On Earth Institute, Chakra, pg 13.

14 "The Inner Tradition of Yoga", Michael Stone, Shambala; 2008, pg 95.

Below are the corresponding koshas, elements, and chakras:

- Annamayaya Kosha- Earth -Muladhara, Swadhistana, Manipura Chakras
- Pranamaya Kosha -Water - Anaharta, Vishuddha Chakras
- Manomaya Kosha -Fire - Ajna Chakra
- Vijnanamaya Kosha -Air - Ajna Chakra
- Anandamaya Kosha -Ether - ¹⁵ Sahadrara Chakra

ANNAMAYKOSHA - SHEATH OF FOOD

The physical body, which we often think of as the "self", is really only the most grossest level of humanness. This is the physical being that is bound by birth and death.

It is in the Annamaya kosha that the FMS sufferer's *perception of stress* impacts the reality of the physical body. Our body's sympathetic nervous system's function is to engage the fight/flight/freeze reaction in response to a perceived stress. The parasympathetic nervous system's function is to regulate the sympathetic nervous system and to assist in bringing the individual's nervous system back to homeostasis. However, the constant perception of stress by an individual makes it difficult for the parasympathetic system to regulate. Chronic stress is the result; and after months and years of this malfunctioning, the individual's system reacts with heightened cortisol levels, suppressed immune function, high blood pressure, breathing irregularities, overstimulation of endocrine system, digestion and elimination issues, muscular contractions and behavioural over reactivity to immediate environment.¹⁶

Furthermore, in people with FMS there is often a serious disconnect between their bodies and their minds. With the rise of FMS symptoms, it may be the first time that an FMS sufferer has been forced to acknowledge the body and the way that she/he has been treating it up to that point.¹⁷

The fibromyalgia sufferer is treated with Ayurveda in the Annamaya kosha as Ayurvedic philosophy addresses the food sheath and is built on the belief that food is medicine and medicine is food. When the diet of an individual is wrong, medicine will be of little use; however, when an individual's diet is correct, there is no need for medicine.¹⁸

An initial Dosha assessment is the first step in a yoga therapy session and an introduction to Ayurvedic philosophy and treatments is an Annamaya kosha treatment for the FMS sufferer using yoga therapy.

¹⁵ For Iyengar's Kosha and Element concordance see <http://www.surrenderworks.com/library/imports/breath.html>

¹⁶ Copyright Karen Claffey, Heaven on Earth Yoga Institute, 2011.

¹⁷ <http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=53894>

¹⁸ Copyright Karen Claffey, Heaven on Earth Yoga Institute, 2011.

"[Fibromyalgia] can be described as 'Mansa Dhatugat and Mansavrut Vata'. Fibromyalgia is perceived as a Vata imbalance. Vata is the main imbalance and aggravated Vata destabilizes the nervous system and can create hypersensitivity leading to pain and tenderness. Accumulation of Ama (toxins) and shrotorodha are also contributory factors."¹⁹

THE PRANAMAYA KOSHA - BREATH OR ENERGY

The Pranamaya kosha is the first subtle layer, meaning it is out of reach and out of sight, unlike the Annamaya kosha which is visible as the physical form. The body is enveloped in the field of prana and is the active working of the mind (Manomaya kosha). The Pranamaya kosha also interacts with the Annamaya kosha as all layers rest and influence one another. Pranamaya is breath but it is also energy, Vital Energy. The autonomic nervous system is mostly unconscious and is primarily felt in the Annamaya kosha; however, it is also influenced by the prana or breath. Fibromyalgia sufferers often have irregular breathing patterns or hold their breath in response to muscular or joint pain, headache or migraine pain, or pain from any number of the symptoms of this syndrome. Constant episodes of pain shifts the nature of the autonomic nervous system to a

Prana Vayu	Udana	Prana	Samana	Apana	Vyana
Controls	Speech, Senses	Respiration: Upward flowing Prana; connected to inhale	Digestion: functions of abdominal organ & glands	Elimination/Sex: Downward flowing Prana; childbirth, reproductive organs, intestines, bladder; connected to exhale	Circulation
Location	Head	Upper Chest: Throat to bottom of heart	Solar Plexus: Bottom of heart to just below navel	Lower Torso: Just below navel to pelvic floor (governs legs)	Core to extremities: entire body
Chakra	5 th , 6 th , 7 th	4 th	3 rd	1 st , 2 nd	All
Color	Blue, Violet	Green	Yellow	Red, Orange	Rose
Dosha	Astral Body	Vatta/air	Pitta/fire	Kapha/earth	

heightened state of excitability and arousal whereby chronic pain results. Chronic pain will not only affect prana, it will degenerate into maladaptive Vital Energies. Vital Energies, otherwise known as the "Prana Vayus, control all our functions on all levels, physical, mental and spiritual".²⁰ The table above briefly defines the Prana Vayus, their function, location, chakra correspondence and dosha.

Chakras "consider the individual from several perspectives including physical imbalances, sense organ imbalances, endocrine gland imbalances and psycho-emotional imbalances."²¹ The seven chakras are energy centres that receive and express prana, or Vital Energies.

¹⁹ <http://www.drnishavedicremedies.com/Diseases.php>

²⁰ Copyright Karen Claffey, Heaven on Earth Yoga Institute, 2011

²¹ Kristine Kaoverii Weber, Heaven on Earth Yoga Institute, 2011.

Determining which Chakras are unbalanced, or incorrectly expressing prana, is another aspect of treatment in yoga therapy which assists in determining appropriate modalities of therapy. Chakras Psycho-emotional imbalances will be addressed in the Manomaya Kosha.

Physical Symptoms of Chakra Imbalances of Fibromyalgia

First chakra- Mulhardhara chakra: weight problems, haemorrhoids, constipation, sciatica, degenerative arthritis, knee trouble

Second chakra- Svadhistana chakra: lack of sex drive, uterine/bladder or kidney trouble, lower back pain

Third chakra - Manipura chakra: hypoglycemia, digestive disorders

Fourth chakra -Anaharta chakra: high blood pressure, asthma, heart or lung disease

Fifth chakra - Vishuddha chakra: sore throat, stiff neck, hearing problems, thyroid

Sixth chakra -Ajna: headaches, blurred vision, nightmares, eye strain

Seventh chakra-Sahasrara chakra: depression, alienation, confusion, learning problems, apathy

Sense Organ Imbalances

First chakra: Mulhardhara chakra, smell

Second chakra: Svadhistana chakra, taste

Third chakra: Manipura chakra, sight

Fourth chakra: Anaharta chakra, touch/feeling

Fifth chakra: Vishuddha chakra, hearing

Endocrine Gland Imbalances

Second chakra: Svadhistana chakra, ovaries and testes. Reproductive problems, menstrual,

Third chakra: Manipura chakra, adrenals, pancreas, liver, stomach, kidney and adipose fat. The imbalances here result in adrenal fatigue/exhaustion.

Fourth chakra: Anaharta chakra, immune system issues

Fifth chakra: Vishuddha chakra

MANOMAYA KOSHA -MIND

The Manomaya kosha is the mind sheath and it is influenced by, and influences the two previous koshas through prana and the nervous system of the rest of the body. All thoughts, feelings, emotions and input from the five senses originate and reside here. It is stimulus-response affective, it is the Ego, which constantly changes itself.

It is our response to how our mind perceives the world around us and the inputs we decide to allow in our environment that helps determine the functioning of this sheath and that ultimately affect the whole being and personality.

Recent research of Fibromyalgia sufferers shows there is often a mind-set that corresponds to this syndrome. Often, individuals with FMS have boundary issues, put their needs last, possess a sense of worth that is driven by accomplishment, are unable to say no to other's requests for help, and are incapable of Self identification (witness).

The chakras most imbalanced in this sheath is the Manipura and Anaharta chakras. When in excess an individual with a Manipura imbalance will be "dominating, blaming, aggressive, constantly active, workaholic and/or perfectionist".²² A deficiency will manifest in an individual that has "weak will, low self esteem, self-condemning, passive, sluggish and fearful".

An excessive imbalance in the Anaharta chakra will result in poor boundaries, possessiveness, jealousy, narcissistic tendencies, overtly smothering and loving. A deficiency imbalance is characterised by being shy, lonely, isolated, lacking empathy, bitter, critical, judgemental and resentful tendencies.

VIJNANAMAYA KOSHA -THE BODY OF KNOWING

The Vijnanamaya kosha can be defined as the reasoning, intuitive, willful and discriminating aspect of our being (described in Sanskrit as the buddhi). It is the most causal sheath or layer so far and is determined by karma, the laws of action and reaction. Unlike the Manomaya kosha that is subject-able to winds of change in environment and sensory response, Vijnanamaya kosha is uninfluenced by constantly shifting and changing reality. It is the first layer of the causal mind located in the Vishudda chakra, the Ajna chakra (the front part of the cerebrum), and the Sahasrara chakra.²³ Metaphysically, it is considered the first embodiment of light and the intuitive nature that resonates within us all, in varying degrees of accessibility. Often we will go to other people for their opinions on us, when really it is our intuition that is aware of our best interest. The function of the vijnanamaya kosha or intellect is to weigh everything through reason, discriminating between vice and virtue, truth and untruth, good and bad, right and wrong. Vijnanamaya kosha has the higher wisdom to seek Truth by going within and toward the eternal centre of consciousness.

As stated in Manomaya kosha, the individual with FMS is characterised as in constant physical and psychological motion, forever doing for others, often foregoing after their own needs. The intuition is difficult to access for those with this syndrome. The will is strong, discrimination and reasoning is skewed towards depressive and anxiety like personality traits.²⁴

22 Ibid, pg 156

23 http://www.soyayoga.com/archivearticles_vijnanamaya_kosha.html

24 <http://informahealthcare.com/doi/abs/10.1080/080394899427827>

ANADAMAYA KOSHA THE BLISS SHEATH

Anandamaya Kosha is a sheath of an entirely different reality from that of the mind and body. It is bliss without any physical or emotional causes. "Practitioners who arrive at this level through their meditation may think that they have reached the ultimate but in fact they haven't. The anandamaya kosha is still governed by avidya or ignorance and is a part of prakriti or material existence."²⁵

Yogic remedies for condition

Yoga Therapy remedies include: asana, Ayurvedic diet recommendations, pranayama, yoga nidra and meditation.

ASANA

Restorative asanas increase circulation and oxygen flow—keys to healing—without irritating the body. (Raising heart rate and blood pressure and creating more lactic acid in more rigorous forms of exercise can trigger a worsening of symptoms.) *The body responds to gentleness.*

However, someone with FMS can do all the 'right' restorative poses, but if she/he views the asanas as a way to 'fix' the body rather than as a gateway to a state of compassionate acceptance, healing through asana will be difficult to achieve. Mindful, loving yoga restores energy to the fatigued body, allowing the cells, senses, and nerves to quiet down. Being still is an opportunity to listen to the many beautiful things the body has to say but has not been listening to for a long time. It is also about forming discipline—the discipline of peace surrounding something a fibro sufferer may feel out of control with. Rather than a discipline of more and more, it can be the discipline of less and less, a non obsessive daily practice.

Grounding, balancing, centring asanas bring the hyper-vigilant muscles and joints to peace, and allow the mind/brain to start to build trust in the body, self-nurturing, bringing awareness to body movement in general.

To heal there also needs to be acceptance of the reality of what the body is feeling and respond accordingly. It is imperative to not force something onto the body that it is not comfortable with. Because a sufferer may feel energetic on some days than on others, it is important to respect what the body wants to do, as opposed to what the brain's expectations are.

Restorative chest-opening and back-bending poses can also be a good place to start, including *supta baddha konasana* (reclining bound angle) and *supta virasana* (reclining hero), each supported on the back with bolsters or blankets.

Moving forward, the Joint Freeing series is a sequence that allows for greater movement and focus on movements coordinated with the breath. Breath first, *always*, followed by movement. The entraining of muscles to feel comfortable in movement and witnessing the good feelings a fibro body

25 http://www.soyayoga.com/archivearticles_anandamaya_kosha.html

can experience in movement is absolutely necessary. Focusing on Muscle Energy (ME), lovingly hugging muscles to the bones, creating a feeling of safety, will allow the nervous system to relax & immune system to strengthen.

Once the client is ready to move forward from this step, a yoga practice that includes plenty of chest-opening and back-bending poses may help promote feelings of openness, acceptance, and courage. Helpful asanas include setu bandha sarvangasana (bridge pose), bitilasana (cow pose), urdhva mukha svanasana (upward-facing dog), and anuvittasana (standing backbend).

Below are the primary symptoms of FMS and how asana practice assists in relief of those symptoms.

Muscle and Joint Pain

While physical movement is generally considered beneficial for fibromyalgia, exercise-induced pain in fibromyalgia patients is common. To avoid the likelihood that the student will abandon the yoga practice altogether when over-striving increases the pain, it is important to begin slowly and gently.

Therapeutic yoga practice will ideally include guided meditation before and after asanas. Along with metta and mindfulness practices, meditations that use healing or calming images (e.g., healing light, being in nature) can be very helpful in reducing pain.

Stiffness

It might be preferable to schedule the yoga practice later in the day, after the body has become more malleable with the day's movement.

Sleep

Relaxation techniques are the most important practice to do before sleep. They help to ratchet down the "fight- or-flight" responses of the sympathetic nervous system and promote the calming effects of the parasympathetic system. They are best for helping to induce sleep in fibromyalgia sufferers. Helpful restorative poses to start would be:

*relaxation pose with chair

*side-lying relaxation pose

* savasana

Headaches

Chronic headaches are a typical fibromyalgia symptom; in the confidential information form that you provide for new students, it is a good idea to include a question about headaches and what triggers them.

Other Teaching Considerations

Poor balance : Yoga therapy should therefore include standing balancing asanas that build lower body and core strength and help to increase a sense of groundedness. Good choices are vrksasana (tree) and standing ardha pavana muktasana (wind relieving). The yoga therapist should always offer the option to begin by placing one hand on the wall or the back of a chair to help build confidence in standing balancing asanas.

Those with fibromyalgia are sometimes sensitive to bright lights: always dim or turn off overhead lights, especially during supine positions

Dizziness: most inverted asanas are contraindicated in fibromyalgia, except for supported viparita karani (legs up the wall), which is a milder inversion that may help to induce sleep. Some forward-bending asanas, even balasana (child's pose), may induce or exacerbate dizziness or lightheadedness in fibromyalgia students.

The same modifications noted for inversion-induced headaches apply for problems with dizziness or lightheadedness. A bolster or folded blankets to support the head may help prevent dizziness in child's pose or other restorative head-down positions.

AYURVEDIC DIET

Ayurveda teaches that *no one* knows more about your health than you, provided you've learned to hear and understand the messages your body provides.

The purpose of Ayurveda is the creation of balance among mind, body and spirit. And it's lessons are derived from the powerful connections between physical self, emotions, and even everyday routines and activities.

Often fibromyalgia symptoms resolve when basic physiological balance is restored. This is the foundation of the Ayurvedic approach to all chronic disorders. First, by restoring healthy lifestyle we stop the mistakes that create the root imbalances for the basis of the fibromyalgia condition. Secondly, by assessing where imbalances are in the biological intelligence that controls the basic functions of the body (digestion, metabolism, elimination, circulation, nervous system and immunity), and third: using natural approaches to remove those imbalances, often symptoms of fibromyalgia begin to lessen and disappear.

Fibromyalgia can be described as 'Mansa Dhatugat and Mansavrut Vata' and is perceived as a Vata imbalance. Vata is the main imbalance and Aggravated Vata de-stabilizes the nervous system and can create hypersensitivity leading to pain and tenderness. Accumulation of Ama (toxins) and obstruction of the body channels are also contributory factors.²⁶

Ayurvedic Treatment for Fibromyalgia:

The aggravation of Vata dosha and accumulation of Ama (toxins) are the primary causes and should be treated mainly. Associated weak digestion, constipation, and effects of chronic stress should also be tackled.

26 <http://ayurveda-foryou.com/treat/fibromyalgia.html>

Panchakarma Therapy for Fibromyalgia:

Pre-purification measures namely 'snehan' and 'swedan' are very useful to balance Vata and to loosen the toxins. Snehan is the Herbalized Oil Massage. This oil is applied to the entire body with a particular type of massage. Swedan is sudation or sweating and is given immediately following the snehan. An herbal concoction may be added to the steam to further enhancement of effect.

Daily herbalized oil massage also provides a deeply soothing and balancing effect to the entire nervous system. The motion of massage creates heat and friction which enhances circulation and helps cleanse the areas of chemical impurities that could be aggravating and hyper-sensitizing nerve tissues.

Diet and Nutrition for Fibromyalgia :

The following is the diet suggested for the patients suffering form Fibromyalgia:

- Vegetable juices and soups
- Coconut water and Coconut milk
- Juice of carrot, cucumber, beetroot
- Cooked vegetables
- Spices like cumin, coriander, ginger asafetida.
- Green salad with a dressing of lemon juice and a little salt
- Khichadi

Fibromyalgia sufferers should avoid the following:

- Eating hot, spicy and fried foods.
- Too much tea, coffee, alcohol.
- Sleeping during the day and staying up late at night
- Mental tensions
- Diet rich in healthy fruits and veggies, freshest possible. Organic is best for renewing energy and rebuilding immunity
- Ginger tea to aid digestion and help cleanse the body of toxins

Abhyanga -Warm oil massage -relieve stress from the central nervous system

Shirodhara -pouring of warm oil on the 3rd eye centre -insomnia and exhaustion

For a complete listing of foods appropriate to balance Vata, see:

http://allayurveda.com/dietp_cfood.asp

MEDITATION

Meditation for fibromyalgia sufferers provides an excellent way to de-stress, to create an awareness of their inner voice and the repetitive negative thought patterns. Meditation also decreases muscle tension and increases levels of endorphins.

Metta (loving-kindness) meditation uses specific silent mental phrases or mantras directed at oneself and others. Because this meditation promotes compassion, an awareness of the goodness within us, and an appreciative joy in our relationships with other beings, it is a powerful tool for relieving feelings of isolation and depression.

Heart Sutra Meditation

Begin this meditation with 5-10 mins of breathing awareness, then gradually shift your awareness toward your heart.

Next, very gently and without any force whatsoever, introduce the intention of *stillness* into your mind, and your body. Let the stillness of your thoughts radiate through your physical self like soft ripples in a pond.

Feel the stillness bringing your mind and your heart together.

Now let four words enter and pass through your consciousness. These are the sutras -spiritual stitches to mend and strengthen your heart, mind and soul.

They are: Peace.....Harmony.....Laughter....Love....

Silently repeat each of these words four times, with a pause of 10-15 seconds between each repetition. Each time the word enters your consciousness, feel it rippling out through your body, and even outside your body into the universe beyond.

With time you will be able to do this while still maintaining a deep stillness of mind and spirit.

When you learn to nurture the faint presence of a thought within a profound inner silence, wave coherence of your heart and brain results.

Meditate and reflect on your heart, acknowledge how it feels, open or closed, receptive or defended. Repeat this metta meditation to yourself:

May I be happy

May I be peaceful

May I be safe from harm

May I enjoy happiness and the root of happiness

May I experience ease and wellbeing in mind, body and spirit.

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) significantly reduces stress in this population.²⁷ MBSR is an 8-week intensive training in mindfulness meditation, based on ancient healing practices, which meets on a weekly basis. Mindfulness practice is ideal for cultivating greater awareness of the unity of mind and body, as well as of the ways the unconscious thoughts, feelings, and behaviours can undermine emotional, physical, and spiritual health.

YOGA NIDRA

There has been significant research done which proves yoga nidra is a scientifically sound method to improve health and alleviate illness. Studies have shown that a single hour of yoga nidra is *as restful and refreshing as four hours of conventional sleep*. The most observable effect of the practice of Yoga Nidra is the extremely deep relaxation of the nervous system. It has been clinically shown to be one of the most powerful methods available to achieve this state without the use of chemical agents.

Fibromyalgia sufferers need to learn how to reconnect with self, breath, and their internal environment. There is a sense of emotional blockage, that emotions are not being digested – the person has emotional indigestion. At some level, people with fibromyalgia have a truth that they are hiding from. This truth, or difficult emotion, may be a result of some traumatic event in their past (and the ‘traumatic event’ is not always obvious). This event has not been properly registered and dealt with by the conscious mind so it has become ‘locked down’ in the body – a neuromuscular lock.²⁸

There are a number of foundational stages that make up the structure of Yoga nidra. Without a doubt, the most scholarly and renown teacher and student of yoga nidra is Richard C. Miller. With great insight he has broken down sleep-travel through the koshas as one goes through yoga nidra:

Each kosha may be likened to a territory we travel to during the process. Upon arrival, lying in savasana, we explore and map out the territory of each kosha - - getting to know it, so to speak.

We have no agenda in our exploration other than being with the various sensations, images, thoughts, etc., that we encounter as we explore. When practicing it is easy to be confused that there is something we are trying to obtain or do. But anything that we obtain is not who we are as it remains a fragile object in our awareness. So Yoga nidra is not in the becoming process. Yoga nidra can never take us, through striving, to what we are. When we strive we are actually going away from who we are. Striving keeps us fixed in a mental image.

We may be able to suppress various aspects of ourself such as emotions, thoughts or negative attitudes and beliefs we hold to be true about ourselves, but we cannot get rid of them. Better that we consciously allow them to be as they are. Our true Nature begins to shine as radiant and unperturbable joyfulness only when we accept and welcome all that is.

27 <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21197347>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19277851>

28 <http://www.embodiedwellbeing.com/2011/07/help-with-fibromyalgia-and-chronic-pain/>

During yoga nidra, we intentionally locate and investigate sensations, feelings, emotions, thoughts and images. We go into them. We explore them. We bring them into consciousness. As these impressions are allowed to float freely in awareness, without our trying to repress or express them, they arise and fade away into the background, no longer bothersome to the mind because the mind has no intention to refuse or deny their existence.

Whatever we refuse we repress into the unconscious and whatever lives in the unconscious gets projected out into the world. If we reject our anger and violence then we project anger and violence into the world. When we are angry that we are being judged it is only because we are already judging ourselves. You see, no one ever hurt us. We are only always hurting ourselves.

Embodying this understanding is powerfully transformative. When we shift from trying to change ourselves to being non-judgmentally aware, magic happens, for anything that is placed in awareness, transforms. When we relinquish all attempts to change the world and ourselves, when we cease trying to re-make the world and ourselves according to our mental images and beliefs about how we think things 'should be, transformation occurs. We are often engaged in acts of self-hatred. In these moments we do not like ourselves as we are or life as it is. This is a form of self-loathing.

When we live in accepting at first we emphasize the objects that we are accepting. These objects include other people and situations, our emotions, our memories and our thoughts and images. But as we live in accepting the state of accepting is emphasized.

In the first stage of yoga nidra we assert our intention to enter into the practice. We acknowledge that we will give the practice our undivided attention. This intention sets the direction and tone. Our intention is to remain focused and undistracted throughout each session. Yoga nidra is therefore connected to mindfulness training, training the mind to return to its natural state of one-pointedness.

Our forthright intention at the beginning of yoga nidra affirms our aim to witness these mental dream fragments rather than falling into an unconscious sleep with them. So we set the intention right from the start, to remain alert and aware even while hovering at the edge of sleep consciousness. Self-inquiry demands undivided attention and total interest.

After we have acknowledged our intention we move onto the next stage of yoga nidra. Here we evoke the heart-felt prayers that are living inside of us. These are prayers we hold about loved ones or ourselves. They may be prayers about health, healing, gratitude, compassion or enlightenment. We acknowledge and bring these prayers into clear detail in the forefront of our conscious mind. As we ponder them, we bring them into the present tense. We don't hold our prayers for the future.

Living our prayers as actual facts opens them to their full potential and power.

Usually our attention is oriented toward gross objects and movements in the world. In yoga nidra we proceed through a natural progression moving from gross sensations (vitarka) to very refined levels of energy (vichara). For instance, we move from rotating consciousness through the Anamaya kosha, with its emphasis on gross body sensation, to being aware of the Pranamaya kosha, with its emphasis on the subtle movements of energy in the body.

It is at this time that Yoga Nidra offers you a way to meet your everyday challenges with poise and balance, while reconnecting you to your authentic self.

Annamaya kosha

While we presently experience our physical body as defined by boundaries it is actually a vibrational expanse radiating into infinity. But this is not likely our present lived-experience. In fact, we are numb to many of the physical sensations that are present in our body. This is one reason why disease processes go undetected for months or even years before they erupt to the surface of our awareness

When we rotate awareness through the body we begin and end in a particular order. We begin in the mouth and end in the feet. The areas we primarily work with are richly supplied with nerve fibers and reflex to the sensory cortex in the brain. If you were to see a picture of the sensory cortex mapped onto the human body, a homunculus or "little person" with enlarged features would appear. When you look at the picture you see that the tongue, mouth, lips, face, hands, genitals and feet are enlarged to a greater extent than the torso, arms or legs. So during bodily rotation of consciousness we begin with the tongue and move to the throat, mouth, and lips, and on into the hands, down through the pelvis and into the feet. As we move through the physical body we simultaneously travel through the brain by way of the sensory cortex.

When we rotate consciousness through the body over and over again, practice after practice, we create pathways of conscious awareness. For instance, where once we experienced the hand as a dense mass of sensation bounded by the walls of the skin, now we experience the hand as a vast field extending outwardly and inwardly in all directions into infinity. We find that the body is a vastness unfathomable to the mind, unlimited by conceptual boundaries. And we realize that this is the truth concerning all objects. All objects are radiating energies without distinct boundaries. Everything, taken together, is One radiating pulsation, vibrating from itself into itself.

Pranamaya Kosha

As we begin to focus attention into the breath we move gracefully and naturally into the next stage, the exploration of the Pranamaya Kosha or "energy body".

We do not try to change or alter the breath in any way. We simply note the spontaneously arising breath. By attending to the breathing body we become conscious of the subtle energies that animate the breath and the physical body.

We follow the breath back and forth. We also spend time counting each breath. Counting is an important exercise. It is a form of mindfulness training. When you methodically place your attention on counting the breaths, you will, at first, find yourself being distracted and you will have to start the count again. You will begin again and once more, you will lose your count. And this will occur over and over again. But you will discover that the counting is sharpening your ability to focus. With practice you will find yourself wide-awake and alert. And this alertness will allow you to appreciate the subtle movements of energy, which make up the Pranamaya kosha energy body

Counting is a helpful practice in developing the one-pointedness required to progress into the deeper practices of Yoga Nidra.

Manomaya Kosha

As we experience the energetic movements uncovered by the breath, deeper components of feeling and emotion begin to surface into awareness. These signal that we have entered the domain governed by the Manomaya kosha. Here we attend to the naturally arising pairs of opposites such as heaviness and lightness, comfort and discomfort, happiness and sadness, anger and equanimity, and pain and pleasure. And as we explore the Manomaya Kosha we intentionally invoke these plays of opposites.

The thinking mind has to stop when we invite it to be simultaneously open in different directions. And when the mind is quiet we taste our spacious, non-linear nature.

We play in the field of opposite movements where we first go in one direction, then in the opposite direction, and then we merge the two directions together as one movement. First we invite different feelings into awareness. We may, for instance, cultivate the positive feeling of comfort. Then we locate its opposite in the body, a feeling of discomfort. Then we swing back and forth between these two feelings going first to comfort, then to discomfort and back again until we are able to experience both simultaneously.

While working with the Manomaya kosha, we also explore where specific emotions are experienced in particular areas of the body. Here we utilize traditional symbols such as the chakras.

An equally important reason to examine the field of opposites is because repressed and unresolved feelings and emotions, stored in the unconscious, give rise to physical and mental unrest. The process of yoga nidra helps us reclaim these pockets of repression and aversion. Then, when these so-called 'negative' emotions rise up, we are able to welcome them. We are able to be with them rather than refuse them. We realize that these are only passing phenomena. They are natural movements in our body/mind.

Vijnanamaya Kosha

As we explore the pairs of opposites in the realms of feeling and emotion, images and scenes, even entire stories, spontaneously arise in our mind's eye. Now we have arrived at the Vijnanamaya Kosha, the sheath of intellect and pure mind. Here personal and archetypal images emerge that are associated with unconscious forces below the level of the conscious mind.

And as before, we intentionally conjure up and pair the opposites--scenes and images that we detest with scenes that make us peaceful. As in all the koshas during the process of yoga nidra, we learn to welcome all the experiences that life brings.

While exploring the Vijnanamaya kosha we also work with colour and sound. Each body organ, sensation, image, emotion, thought and memory may be thought of as being composed of sound and colour. Each of these configurations may be viewed as made up of vibrating particles or waves

along the spectrum of energy. Colour and sound are energetic patterns along such a spectrum. In yoga nidra we take advantage of this understanding and work intentionally with the different wavelengths of colour and sound during different phases of our practice.

As we explore the various images, colours, sounds and concepts that arise in the Vijnanamaya kosha deep residues hidden in the unconscious are liberated and rise into awareness. As these residues move out of the unconscious and dissolve in the fire of awareness feelings of peace, stillness and joy manifest in the body/mind.

Anandamaya Kosha

The spontaneous arising of joy signals that we are moving into the territory of the Anandamaya kosha, the sheath of joy and bliss. Memories help invoke these sensations into the body/mind. But then we detach the memory from the experience of joy and remain only with the embodied sensations.

Joy is native to the body. It is the inherent disposition of the body/mind. Joy is not dependent upon a situation or an object for its existence. However, our cultural conditioning informs us otherwise. We have been taught that happiness is dependent upon our having some experience.

During yoga nidra we take time to live fully and consciously in joy devoid of any object. Then joy permeates the body as our moment-to-moment waking and dreaming experience.

Asmitamaya and Beyond

When we live in and as Presence we feel no sense of separation. At the end of yoga nidra we open our eyes with this understanding and now look back upon a world that we had thought was composed of separate objects. We see that there is no division anywhere. Separation is only the product of a split-mind. We understand that everything is made of the same substance. We may call this substance God, Spirit, Awareness, Consciousness or Presence. But we realize that the objects we are looking at are made of the same substance as that which is looking at them. There is no separation between the one who is looking and that which is being looked at. In this moment we are the Unity of all that exists. We live a co-merged reality where we simultaneously experience that the things of the world, while appearing separate, are actually extensions of the Unified field of Consciousness, God, Presence or Awareness.²⁹

PRANAYAMA

"...controlling the breath is the precursor to controlling everything about your life - the physical body, the emotions, and the spirit" Sam Dworkis

Pranayama has several unique properties, one of the most important of which is the ability for us to control an autonomic (involuntary) function – breathing is an unconscious function of the body that can be made conscious with great ease.

29 http://www.healthy.net/Health/Article/The_Principles_and_Practice_of_Yoga_Nidra/8101/2

Pranayama provides a link between the mind and the body, Manomaya kosha and the Annamaya kosha. The link between the two is the Pranamaya and it is the link to settle the mind and balance the body. Pranamaya kosha is accessible at any time: It is possible to communicate with the body through the breath, it's a two-way relay.

People with fibromyalgia suffer from a Vata imbalance. Vata can also be brought back into balance using Pranayama.

As mentioned above (see Pranamaya Kosha, chart on page 17), Udana Vayu governs the upward movement of Vata and is responsible for exhaling in the process of breathing. Udana Vayu is also responsible for moving energy towards the brain when we need to think deeply about a particular subject. However, when Udana Vayu is too strong we experience excessive rumination and an inability to quiet the mind.

Prana Vayu governs the inward movement of energy and is responsible for inhaling in the process of breathing. Prana Vayu helps us to bring food and nourishment into the body and balances Udana Vayu.

When either Udana or Prana Vayus are too strong the energetic movement in our body is affected, impairing the natural function of the body and resulting in excessive thinking, anxiety, constipation, indigestion, etc.

Performing simple, deep, equal inhales and exhales restores the balance between these two sub-doshas. As we inhale we strengthen Prana Vayu and encourage a downward movement of energy, as we exhale we strengthen Udana Vayu and encourage an upward movement of energy. It is also possible to extend either the inhale or exhale in order to correct a chronic imbalance, bringing mental clarity and tranquility.

The third subdosha involved in pranayama is called Apana Vayu. Apana is considered the most important subdosha of Vata as it provides grounding and holding for the body and for the other Vata subdoshas. Therefore without a stable Apana Vayu, the body struggles to function appropriately. The Charaka Samhita reads:

Apano apanagaha pakvadhanalayo apanaha

(Apana is the root of all the vayus)

Furthermore, stress often exacerbates pain. When in pain, people tend to hold their breath or breathe with shallowness. An easy way to alleviate pain is to focus on breathing, which can be done anywhere, anytime.

Used appropriately to calm an overtaxed nervous system and induce relaxation in a fibromyalgia sufferer, breath can be "the fundamental key that unlocks the tightness of the body." The emphasis is on breathing gently and evenly.

An excellent place to begin is with Full Wave Breathing. The intention of Full Wave Breathing is combining the breath with intention for full awareness. First, attention to opening the breathing

mechanism so that the lower, mid, and upper lobes of the lungs expand fully. This will markedly increased oxygen uptake and transport to cells. The "surrender" of the exhale is a concept that opens the "breather" to their expansive nature.

The effect of Full Wave Breathing can be felt with increased energy, ability to focus, endurance, recovery from chronic physical symptoms and emotional disturbances, etc. The circular nature of the Full Wave Breath moves energy, so stored trauma and stressors move creating an expansive feeling in both mind and body.

Breath and Fibro-flare Up

Of great benefit is teaching how to breath into the painful areas when there is fibro-flare up. Breathing into each painful area, allowing the breath to fully enter and surround the area, then exhaling up and out. Repeating each inhalation, exhalation moving from ankles and up legs, pelvic area, chest, neck and arms, etc.

CHAKRA

The Solar Plexus Chakra is located below the breast bone. The colour of this chakra is yellow. The parts of the body affected by this chakra are the muscles, skin, the large intestine, the stomach, the liver, the pancreas and other organs and glands in the region of the solar plexus. This is the chakra those of us with Fibromyalgia need to work on.

This chakra relates to our sense of sight and impaired vision. This chakra is concerned with our sense of power, control, freedom and mental activity.

Illnesses associated with this chakra are digestive difficulties, gas, food allergies, liver problems, diabetes, gall stones, muscle cramps and spasm, depression, and difficulty breathing. Excessive energy in this chakra causes people to be judgmental, workaholic, a perfectionist, overly intellectual, and emotionally cold. Deficient energy in this chakra causes people to be depressed, have a lack of confidence, worry about what others think, confused, have poor digestion, be afraid of being alone, jealous and mistrustful.

The negative archetype of the Solar Plexus Chakra is the Servant. The Servant archetype undervalues itself and does not honour its basic worth. The Servant is not as dysfunctional or disempowered as the Victim or the Martyr, but it represents someone who does a job well but who is neglected and receives little acknowledgement for what it does. The servant does not have a sense that it deserves better than what it receives in its life. As the Servant is ignored it finds itself lingering in the background. The Servant does not have enough of a sense of its esteem and worth to acknowledge itself and so is dependant on others to give it what it cannot give to itself. This archetype relinquishes its personal power and emotional needs in order to win acknowledgement and approval.

The healthy archetype of the Solar Plexus Chakra is the Warrior. This archetype lets us all be the hero or heroine in our own lives. We take control, harness our willpower and live from an empowered position in our work, relationships and in the world around us. The more we can give

ourselves permission to feel good in the power of our own energy, the more personal power we accumulate in our lives. Our ability to stand up for ourselves is associated with this archetype.

Crystals to balance the Solar Plexus Chakra are Citrine, Gold Topaz, Amber, Tigers Eye, and Gold Calcite. These stones can be carried in a pocket, placed in the area of the Solar Plexus Chakra or made into an essence.

Imagine the Solar Plexus Chakra. The colour of this chakra should be a beautiful, clear yellow. If any other colour is seen, remove it and imagine the chakra being filled with yellow energy. Once are able to imagine the proper colour filling this chakra, imagine it spinning in a clockwise direction. Spin it faster and faster as you fill it with yellow energy.

Use the 'Feelings Prayer' or the 'Prayer for Love' (see attached) to work on the feelings of being a martyr – the sense of helplessness, guilt, and any other emotions connected with this chakra.³⁰

Conclusion

Fibromyalgia is a condition with a somewhat mysterious or unidentifiable medical explanation for onset. It is characterised by symptoms that seem to be almost limitless in number, and can severely restrict and compromise an individual from full engagement in life.

However, through the applications of Yoga Therapy, a fibromyalgia sufferer can heal. FMS *is* treatable, relief is available and control over the seemingly uncontrollable nature of the syndrome is possible. It is by giving the client a Yoga Therapy program of manageable size, and by putting the control and healing into their hands that this syndrome can be recitified.

With more research, more YT FMS-specific classes and workshops led by trained Yoga Therapists, fibromyalgia can eventually be recognized as a syndrome with manageable symptomatology.

30 <http://article.shreevedic.com/article/2011/04/chakra-healing-solar-plexus-chakra/>

Prayer for Love

Thank you, Creator of the Universe, for the gift of life you have given me.

Thank you for giving me everything that I have ever truly needed.

Thank you for the opportunity to experience this beautiful body and this wonderful mind.

Thank you for living inside me with all your love, with your pure and boundless spirit, with your warm and radiant light.

Thank you for using my words, for using my eyes, for using my heart to share your love wherever I go.

I love you just the way you are, and because I am your creation, I love myself just the way I am.

Help me to keep the love and peace in my heart and to make that love a new way of life, that I may live in love the rest of my life.

Amen

— From “The Four Agreements,” by Don Miguel Ruiz