

The Rehab Report



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Kanata Orthopaedic
Physiotherapy Clinic

Fibromyalgia and Physiotherapy

Fibromyalgia (FM) is a syndrome of widespread pain and tenderness, which can severely impact quality of life and the ability to perform routine activities of daily living. Although its etiology is not fully understood, there is increasing evidence that exercise is an important element of treatment.

A 2008 Cochrane review of 34 studies evaluating the effects of exercise training for FM found moderate quality evidence that aerobic exercise training at recommended intensity levels per week has positive effects on global well being, physical function, pain, and tender points.

Current research also suggests that strength training (previously thought to potentially exacerbate FM symptoms) may reduce the cycle of deconditioning, and allow patients to participate in a wider range of physical activities. A 12-week, twice weekly progressive strength training program using 11 exercises to work the major muscle groups, was shown to significantly improve upper and lower body strength and functionality in routine tasks. Furthermore, the exercise program did not exacerbate FM symptoms or result in musculoskeletal damage or injury.

A physiotherapist can be consulted about a progressive strength training program to help manage FM symptoms.

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Not just for Golfers!

Classifying Back Pain

An estimated two out of three adults will experience lower back pain at some point in their lives. Although in a majority of cases the discomfort is temporary and does not require medical treatment, it is important to be aware of when low back pain may require further medical attention.

The *Annals of Internal Medicine* released a new set of guidelines for classifying types of low back pain and to help plan a course of evaluation and treatment. Here are a few key signs that will let you know when it is time to seek further medical attention:

Back Pain Symptoms	Possible Condition*
Shooting / Tingling	Lumbar disc disease
Pain that intensifies and subsides repeatedly	Kidney stone
Back pain that shoots down one leg to behind the knee	Sciatica
Pain and "tender points" in spine, neck, shoulders and hips	Fibromyalgia

**Annals of Internal Medicine*, October 2, 2008

When is back pain more than just a result of too much shoveling the day before? One important sign is whether there is any loss of sensation or strength in the legs. If that is the case, medical attention may be necessary. An accompanying fever and/or night pain are also important signs to look for.

Once any more serious causes of your back pain are ruled out, a physiotherapist is the ideal clinician to help you develop a comprehensive treatment plan to address any musculoskeletal issues underlying your back problem.

Golfer's Elbow... Not Just for Golfers!

Golfer's elbow is often overshadowed by its counterpart... Tennis Elbow. However, just because it does not receive as much exposure as Tennis Elbow, it is no less serious.

Golfer's Elbow is due to inflammation and micro-tearing of the forearm muscle tendons that attach to the inside of the elbow. It is also known as *medial epicondylitis*. The inflammation of these tendons, or tendonitis, leads to pain at the elbow and down the front of the forearm (forearm flexor muscles); and can be exacerbated with gripping, lifting or carrying. Although named after a sport that commonly causes the problem, Golfer's Elbow is also developed from certain occupations or daily activities, like shoveling snow.

This condition is often self limiting and does not cause any long-term disability, but it can be quite painful during its course. The good news is that it can be very well managed with rest and proper rehabilitation, as described below.

REST: Controlled rest is important in the acute stages of tissue healing for any repetitive strain or tendinous problem. Ice and other modalities such as TENS, IFC, laser and acupuncture can also be helpful.

Stretching: Gentle stretching exercises are important to control symptoms and maximize tendon healing. Your physiotherapist can show you a variety of effective stretches.

Strengthening: Strengthening exercises have been shown to be particularly important during the later stages of healing to enable return to normal activities and sports.

Activity Modification: Typing on a keyboard requires repetitive, small finger and wrist movements that could aggravate Golfer's Elbow. Consulting a physiotherapist for ergonomic advice and/or modifications of your work station is important if this is a factor in your tendonitis.

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Be sure to stay active this winter!

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