

Fibromassage –

a way to less pain

There are between 200 000 and 300 000 people in Sweden who are suffering from fibromyalgia. We however suspect that the number is much higher, since it can take up to 8 years to get the diagnosis confirmed. The disease often hits/ affects young and middle-aged women. It starts with a local chronic pain that becomes more or less permanent. The diagnosis is made by the doctors based on what are called “tender points”- painful points on the body. Common symptoms, more than just muscular pain are, for example, stiff muscles, general tiredness, difficulties with concentration, problems with sleeplessness and headaches. These symptoms are impossible to measure according to many doctors. Many patients are told that they have to learn to live with the pain. Research is now showing that there is help outside of allopathic medicine.

FIBRO-MASSAGE

Stefan Göthager is the initiator of the development of the fibro-massage, a special kind of massage that can give patients with fibromyalgia a reduction in the level of pain and a better quality of life.

The method was developed during the 1990's, to help patients' of fibromyalgia with their pain.

Stefan says that it took 10 years and 1500 massage sessions to reach where we are today. He points out that it wasn't him who did it; it was his patients who created the fibro-massage.

“I went from massaging well-trained athletes, where I could press hard, to patients with so much pain, I could hardly touch them.”

Those patients who had tried traditional massages, very often got worse, the reason for that being that the hard techniques can often trigger pain and release the stress-hormone, Cortisol, Stefan explains.

By listening to and asking his patients, he developed the fibro-massage. A very soft massage that releases oxytocin, a hormone that makes the body calm down, also affects other functions in the body. Stefan explains that the massage is performed by very soft strokes, and some special grips developed just for fibro-massage. The increase in blood flow and the general well being, stimulate the body to recover.

OVERALL PICTURE

It is not enough with only massage to achieve a good result, says Stefan.

It very important to work on the overall picture where massage, diet, mental training, and relaxation, are all important parts.

MORE KNOWLEDGE

Stefan explains that he now works with spreading the knowledge about fibro-massage. He travels around Sweden and gives lectures at different associations and organisations. He conducts courses for people who now work with massage and body therapy and who want learn about fibro-massage. He also has courses where he teaches the basic fibro-massage grips and e-courses for fibro patients and relatives, to make them a part of the rehabilitation process.

This has been highly appreciated, says Stefan.

Instead of feeling helpless when someone close to you, is in pain, one can help to ease the pain and then feel good.

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Fibro-tea

1 Pc Ginger in small peaces

1 pot Lemon balm (Melissa)

3-4 full sticks of Cinnamon

3-4 litre water

Let this boil for 10 minutes.

Leave it to brew under a lid, over night.

Mix this preferably with warm water 50/50,

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Drink twice a day

(Recipe from Stefan Göthager)

**Gun Lindström,
Physiotherapist and stress therapist**

Gun Lindström, explains that she first came in contact with the idea during the 1960's, when she was working in Germany. But when I started to talk about touching and being present, the concept didn't go well with the way people were thinking in Sweden at that time, Gun says. It was only when I meet Stefan 12-13 years ago, that I realized that the time had come to start using my earlier experiences. In the hands of Stefan the way of working became a method, and I directly felt, this is the way I want to work.

Gun points out that fibro-massage is not only the physical treatment, it is the entire concept, and how the therapist meets the patient, based on the patients own situation.

Each treatment is tailor-made for each patient, says Gun, and it is based on the breathing, how each person's breathing affects the capability to relax.

Gun explains about what she calls peace-calm/ relax hormone. It is based on three deep breaths and how you find them when you need them most. Then you always have an effective tool to break the pattern and stress reactions.

– I have used the fibro-concept in different kinds of stress related problems, and seen a very good result, Guns says. Today she is working with Stefan, and lecturing about "To meet and help people with fibromyalgia".

Her wish is that the fibro-concept will become an accepted form of treatment in the future. Her experience says that if fibro-patients get this treatment at an early stage, there is a great chance that they might be cured.

**Kristina Ekelund,
Stefan Göthager's patient**

– "I have achieved a much better life thanks to the fibro-massage", says Kristina Ekelund , one of Stefan's patients. It started with that I got problems with my back and my hips, in the middle of the 80's. 6-7 years ago the pain got worse, I thought it was training pain but it didn't stop. I also developed problems with concentration and I often became very tired. I started going for physio-therapy and was lucky to meet a physiotherapist that sent me for more investigations. She referred me to the clinic for pain, at St. Göran's hospital, where more tests were taken and I got the diagnosis of Fibromyalgia. During the spring of 2002, I started a course for rehabilitation where I also received fibro-massage

The fibro-massage has helped me very much, Kristina says. It is a pleasant activity. It helps during the massage since I can calm down and relax. It also helps me to listen better to the body's own signals. Earlier I was very stressed and I had difficulty to say no. Today I am taking it more easy, am less stressed and I have learned to say no.

The pain is not gone but I have learnt to handle it by relaxing and a change of lifestyle. I feel much better now!