

FIBROMYALGIA EASY GUIDE

Monitoring 1:

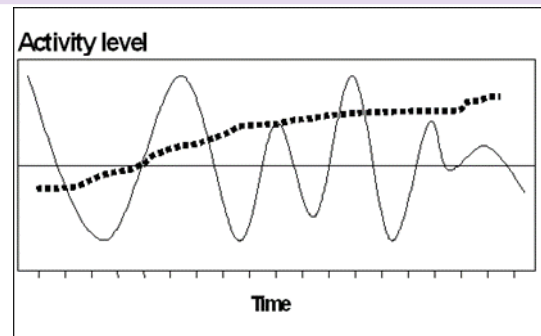
Introduction

Fibromyalgia is a condition that is managed by both medical treatments and lifestyle changes. Monitoring is central to living with Fibromyalgia; it enables you to provide reliable information to your health care team for informed decision making.

Monitoring involves keeping a record of your lifestyle, treatments and symptoms for both yourself and your doctor. Monitoring is very important to Fibromyalgia management, because it improves communication between you and your doctor and enables you to link your symptom changes to your activities and treatments. You can then use this information to work with your health professionals to improve care and treatment plans, as well as to balance your daily activities according to your energy envelope. This will make managing your condition much easier over both the short and long term.

Wait... Why do I have to do all the work?

Sharing your care with your doctor is part of Australian Medicare Chronic Disease Management programs. You are the expert on your individual condition. The choices you make will have a big effect on your quality of life. Gaining an understanding of your condition through information gathering allows you to make more informed choices about your lifestyle and care, which then brings you better quality outcomes.



Line: Push/crash cycle

Dotted line: Pacing lifestyle

The specific benefits of monitoring

One of the main tasks of managing Fibromyalgia is to learn as much about your individual condition and your treatment options as possible. Monitoring is vital, because it allows you to:

- 1. Have records of your condition.** As with all chronic conditions, monitoring is central to effective management. You need to understand your individual condition in order to make the best choices to manage it.
- 2. Find your energy envelope.** Your energy envelope is the range of energy you have available every day for each activity type and energy level. Understanding your energy envelope is the first step in managing your condition.
- 3. Stabilise your condition by balancing your activities and energy envelope.** Once you understand your energy envelope, you should manage your lifestyle appropriately.

- 4. Identify the source of symptom changes.** Your symptoms can flare up because you have overdone it, or simply due to being a part of your condition. Monitoring allows you to distinguish between the two sources.
- 5. Manage the symptoms of your condition.** Your symptoms will flare up when you are over-doing it. Monitoring allows you to record flare ups and the activities that led to them so they can be avoided in the future.
- 6. Gauge the effectiveness of treatments, interventions and medications.** For the best outcomes, treatments should be introduced one at a time and given a few weeks to settle so you can work out whether they are making things better or worse
- 7. Have a record of which treatments, interventions and medications have been tried, as well as the outcomes, for yourself and your doctor.** Communication between you and your doctor is vital. Records are also useful for avoiding treatments you have already tried but forgotten about.
- 8. Get a reality check.** At the end of the week, review your activity log and write some comments. Assess which symptoms were not your fault and which ones you could have avoided with better management.

How can I begin monitoring?

Choose a format that best suits you. Some people use a monitoring diary; others use charts. There are even computer apps that can help you with monitoring. Whichever way you do the monitoring, you should make it as easy as possible for yourself. Monitoring should only take a few minutes a day and should suit your lifestyle.

Key points

- Monitoring involves keeping records for both yourself and your doctor.
- This information can then be used to understand your condition, manage your symptoms and gauge the effectiveness of treatments.

Checklist

- Find a format that best suits you and begin monitoring.
- Make sure that what you monitor includes your activities, symptoms, sleep diet and any treatment changes.

Reference

Campbell, B. Managing Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Fibromyalgia: A Seven – Part Plan, CSH Press, U.S.A, 2010

See also:

Monitoring 2: What, when and how to monitor

Monitoring 3: Monitoring Tools

