

FIBROMYALGIA EASY GUIDE

Monitoring 2:

What, When and How to Monitor

Fibromyalgia is a condition that is managed using both medical treatments and lifestyle changes.

Monitoring of certain areas of your lifestyle is essential in order to gather the kind of information that is needed to effectively manage Fibromyalgia. You can choose to monitor each area separately or to combine them. You can use wall-mounted charts or carry around a diary. You can even use computer applications if you have access to them. Either way, you need to create a system that covers these areas in a way that works best for you and your doctor.

Where do I begin?

The following tools aim to provide a comprehensive assessment to confirm Fibromyalgia as a diagnosis and to establish a treatment baseline at the beginning to measure the changes during treatment.

- 1. The Fibromyalgia Canadian Multisystem Questionnaire, adapted from the Canadian Guidelines Diagnostic Criteria (2004)**
- 2. Bell Disability Scale**

Once you have established your baseline condition and capabilities, you can begin monitoring.

You should include the following:

Activities: An activity log can help you monitor the energy intensity, type and timing of your activities. You will need to record each specific activity (e.g. reading, shopping or meeting friends), as well as the type (e.g. mental, physical or social). You should also record the energy required for the activity (low, medium or high). This information can be used to understand how these activities affect your individual energy envelope and your symptom levels. Don't forget to also

include your emotional and stress levels, as these also require energy and can therefore affect symptoms.

Symptoms: Recording your symptoms is critical for effective monitoring. It allows you to understand your symptom levels, as well as the frequency, interactions and changes of symptoms over time. Symptom logs may vary, depending on your care plan priorities, e.g. a pain log or the Campbell multisystem log which monitors a list of your common Fibromyalgia symptoms (e.g. fog, poor sleep, depression, pain and fatigue). These logs include a space to rate the level of the symptoms (perhaps on a scale of one to ten) at different times of the day (am/pm). Your symptom log may help you identify the cause of increased symptoms so you can respond accordingly. For your ongoing care plan, selecting three of your worst symptoms, e.g. fatigue, pain and cognitive problems, will make monitoring more manageable.

Sleep: As improving sleep is one of the first steps in managing Fibromyalgia, it is important to gather accurate information on your sleep patterns. A sleep chart should include aspects such as the time you went to sleep, the length of sleep, how many times you awoke, how you felt when waking, and any other interferences (e.g. noise, light, dreams or restlessness). This chart becomes part of your sleep management as you work towards identifying and correcting sleep problems. If sleep problems are ongoing, you may need to see a specialist.

Food: Diet and nutrition are part of managing Fibromyalgia. Dietary problems include food sensitivities, nutritional deficiencies, digestion and absorption problems, and changes in the gut bacteria. While there may be general principles, the appropriate diet may vary from person to person, because of the multisystem

nature of the condition. The best way to begin is to keep a food diary that records what you eat, when you eat it and how it makes you feel (how it affects your energy, fatigue levels and cognitive state).

Key Points

- Monitoring is a core step in managing Fibromyalgia.
- Choose a format that works for you and begin monitoring.
- Make sure that what you monitor includes your activities, symptoms, sleep, diet and any treatment changes.

Bell's Functionality Score

100	Fully recovered. Normal activity level with no symptoms
90	Normal activity with mild symptoms at times
80	Near normal activity with some symptoms
70	Able to work full time but with difficulty. Mostly mild symptoms
60	Able to do about 6-7 hours of work a day. Mostly mild to moderate symptoms
50	Able to do about 4-5 hours of work or similar activity at home. Symptoms mostly moderate. Daily rests required
40	Able to leave house every day. Moderate symptoms on average. Able to do about 3-4 hours a day of work or activity like housework, shopping, using computer
30	Able to leave the house several times a week. Moderate to severe symptoms much of the time. Able to do about 2 hours a day of work at home or activity like housework, shopping, using computer
20	Able to leave house once or twice a week. Moderate to severe symptoms. Able to concentrate for one hour or less per day
10	Mostly bedridden. Severe symptoms
0	Bedridden constantly. Unable to care for self

Modified from the Bell's Functionality Score
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