

Fibromyalgia and Chronic Fatigue

Assessment

Postural assessment

- antalgic postures are often present
- hyperkyphosis with head forward posture may be observed
- may be an imbalance of the anterior tilt of the pelvis
- apical or paradoxical breathing patterns may be observed

Palpation

- pain is present bilaterally on palpation, above and below the waist
- trigger points are palpated, not to be confused with tender points

Testing

- AF ROM may result in reduced ROM in affected areas
- AR strength testing may result in pain and weakness in affected muscles
- Pain will be experienced in 11 of the 18 tender points which must include the control areas
- The differential assessment for fibromyalgia is that the palpation of these tender points causes pain local to the area palpated. Unlike myofascial trigger points, there are no referral patterns of pain or taut bands present with fibromyalgia tender points.

General Treatment

- initially the treatments are half hour in duration with 2-3 half hour massages per week
- No two clients will respond the same
- Pre-treatment hydrotherapy of heat is applied for a generally relaxing effect
- Cold hydrotherapy is appropriate in areas experiencing acute tenderness
- Ideally the full body is addressed for maximum relaxation even if some areas are only massaged briefly
- Watching body language, facial expression and tensing of areas in response to techniques applied is important

Massage Fibromyalgia

- Swedish techniques such as effleurage, stroking, scooping and fingertip and palmar kneading over the entire body
- Lymphatic drainage may be used over an area if there is diffuse tenderness or a specific area of severe tenderness
- Light to moderate pressure is often used in the first few treatments to gauge the clients tolerance. Some clients tolerate or need deeper work while others require a light treatment
- If an area cannot tolerate touch areas distant to the painful site are massaged
- Interspersed with Swedish techniques are gentle rhythmical mobilizations, stretching, joint play and trigger point therapy over the entire body
- Trigger points are worked gently over the entire body

- Key relaxation areas should be included such as head, neck, shoulders, abdomen, hands and feet
- Petrissage is used on muscles of mastication, fascial muscles, scalp and suboccipitals as well as the muscles of respiration, scalenes, sternocleidomastoid, the intercostals and diaphragm.
- The head, neck, shoulders and abdominal massage is finished using stroking or lymphatic drainage
- P ROM to the cervical spine and gentle long axis traction or Golgi tendon organ release to the occiput
- Teach diaphragmatic breathing for pain relief

Massage Chronic Fatigue

- Treatments are shorter in duration and not vigorous with a relaxation focus.