

Sharon Rose, L.Ac, Dipl. O.M.



The Rose Family Clinic  
721 E Lancaster Ave  
Downingtown, PA 19335  
(484) 238-8127

[RoseFamilyClinic.com](http://RoseFamilyClinic.com)

## Fibromyalgia

**Sleep:** See my article on Sleep. Letting your body restore itself overnight is very important!

**Exercise:** Light, frequent exercise is key to reducing pain. You may need to start with a 5-10 minute walk once a day. That's fine... just gradually increase the duration. Get up and move a little every few hours instead of sitting still all day. Try to keep your activity levels about the same day to day. Doing too much or being too sedentary will hurt – listen to your body!

**Nutrition:** Eat lightly for dinner, preferably vegetables, grains, and a little protein. Avoid nightshades (tomatoes, eggplant, peppers) as people with FM tend to be sensitive to their natural toxins. Try to eliminate potatoes, tobacco, dairy products, red meat, alcohol, caffeine, sugar, and fried or processed foods from your diet as much as possible. .

**Relaxation:** Being happy is important, too. Pamper yourself by allowing time to read or pursue your other hobbies. Have fun! Enjoy a funny movie, hang out with your friends, pet a cat. Pay attention to the beautiful things in your everyday life.

**Address the cause:** Most FM seems to stem from a past trauma, either physical or emotional. Many patients report a history of abuse. In my case it wouldn't resolve until I dealt with my emotions surrounding both my sister's death and a major car accident. Find a good therapist or some other way to address any hidden grief.

Some people find it useful to write letters to people involved in these emotional injuries. Say it all. You can even write one to yourself. It doesn't matter if the person is still part of your life or if they are alive – it's about expressing yourself. Afterwards, burn the letter as a symbol of letting go of those emotions.

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## Common Typical TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) Patterns for Fibromyalgia

One person may exhibit more than one pattern.

**Liver\* Qi Stagnation** – anxiety, emotional upset, headaches (including migraine headache), being easily angered, muscle stiffness in neck and shoulders, insomnia, waking frequently and having difficulty falling back to sleep, irritable bowel syndrome. All symptoms may be triggered by emotional stress.

**Qi and Blood Deficiency** – specifically spleen Qi deficiency and heart blood/liver blood deficiency, with such symptoms as chronic fatigue, exhaustion, dull headache, muscle weakness and numbness, insomnia, dream-disturbed sleep and waking up tired, palpitations and depression.

**Qi Stagnation and Blood Stasis** – aches and pains in the whole body, burning or gnawing pain with tingling sensations in extremities, headaches.

**Kidney\* Deficiency** (either Yin, Yang, Qi or Essence Deficiency) – there will be impotence or lack of libido for males and infertility issues for both males and females. Other symptoms: sore lower back with restless leg syndrome, irritable bladder, dysmenorrhea, amenorrhea, premenstrual syndrome, hot flashes and night sweats.

**\* Please note that the Chinese organs are energetic concepts and may or may not relate to the physical organs!**

Acupuncture and Chinese medicine provide relief of symptoms by balancing Yin and Yang, and adjusting the circulation of Qi and the blood. Local measures such as heat, therapeutic massage, cupping, and moxibustion in specific regions also help to reduce the pain. A regular plan, with long-term, consistent integrative treatment is necessary in patients with fibromyalgia.