



KATIE BRINDLE

## Fibromyalgia Guide

Treatment techniques based in Chinese medicine



# What is Fibromyalgia?

According to the NHS, fibromyalgia, also called fibromyalgia syndrome (FMS) is a long-term condition that causes pain all over the body. In addition to widespread pain, people with fibromyalgia may also experience increased sensitivity to pain, extreme fatigue, muscle stiffness, difficulty sleeping, problems with mental processes, headaches, and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).<sup>1</sup> The exact cause of fibromyalgia is unknown. Some believe it is related to abnormal levels of certain chemicals in the brain and changes in the way the central nervous system processes pain. Some believe the cause can be genetic. In some cases, fibromyalgia seems to be triggered by a physically or emotionally stressful event, such as an injury or infection, giving birth, having an operation, the breakdown of a relationship or the death of a loved one. There are also studies showing a link between conditions like fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome, and low serotonin levels. While it is usually considered a neurotransmitter (chemical messenger in the brain), it works as a hormone all over the body. Body-wide serotonin dysregulation may contribute to symptoms of fibromyalgia and other related conditions.

While anyone can develop fibromyalgia, it affects roughly 7 times as many women as men. It develops usually between the ages of 30 and 50, but can occur at any age, impacting children and the elderly. Fibromyalgia is very difficult to diagnose since symptoms can resemble those of certain autoimmune diseases (though it is not an autoimmune disease as it is not characterised by inflammation). So while estimates suggest nearly 1 in 20 people may be affected by fibromyalgia, it is not known exactly how many suffer from it.

While anyone can develop fibromyalgia, it affects roughly 7 times as many women as men. It develops usually between the ages of 30 and 50, but can occur at any age, impacting children and the elderly. Fibromyalgia is very difficult to diagnose since symptoms can resemble those of certain autoimmune diseases (though it is not an autoimmune disease as it is not characterised by inflammation). So while estimates suggest nearly 1 in 20 people may be affected by fibromyalgia, it is not known exactly how many suffer from it.

@katie\_brindle

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

[info@katiebrindle.com](mailto:info@katiebrindle.com)



# The Yang Sheng perspective

'Yang Sheng' means 'nurture life'. It is the 'self-care' part of Chinese medicine: the part you can do for yourself, as a complement to any other treatment you may be undertaking.

In addition to physical (visible) symptoms, in Chinese medicine we also consider what is happening with the body at an energetic (invisible) level. 'Qi' (pronounced 'chee') is the energy that runs through all of us. Even when you sit completely still, there will be some movement happening inside you: your heart is beating, your fluids moving – every cell is constantly in motion. All of these different types of energy, combined with your breath, is what makes up your 'qi'.

Qi isn't the same as circulation, but they are linked. When you stimulate your blood flow or move your lymphatic fluid, your qi is also stimulated. Everything flows together. The channels in which qi flows are called meridians. According to Chinese medicine, the quality and movement of qi through the body determines your health. The ideal state is one of smooth flow with no imbalances or blockages, which are called 'stagnation' or stagnant qi. If you have stagnation, whether physical, emotional or spiritual, this will eventually manifest as disease.

@katie\_brindle

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

[info@katiebrindle.com](mailto:info@katiebrindle.com)



# Steps you can take to help

## General advice

Chinese breathing and bodywork techniques have both been scientifically proven to be effective in reducing stress and supporting the body. They:

- Engage the parasympathetic nervous system
- Regulate blood flow
- Reduce heat in the body
- Calm the nervous system
- Strengthen the organs

@katie\_brindle

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

[info@katiebrindle.com](mailto:info@katiebrindle.com)



# Breath & Fibromyalgia

The single most effective way to reduce your stress levels is to take conscious, deep, abdominal breaths. By moving your awareness out of your head and into your breath, your heart rate slows, your mind is calmed, and your blood oxygenated.

[View the Breath Guide](#)

# Qigong & Fibromyalgia

Qigong is a fundamental pillar of Chinese medicine. It is classed as a form of internal exercise. Internal exercise is any combination of slow, considered movements with breath and mental engagement, it's often referred to as 'Chinese yoga'. Qigong is, quite simply, the ultimate selfhealing technique. Whatever your issue, qigong will help to rebalance the body. By learning to manipulate qi around the body, you rejuvenate and energise, lower the heart rate and blood pressure and support the immune system.

[View the Qigong Guide](#)

@katie\_brindle

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

[info@katiebrindle.com](mailto:info@katiebrindle.com)



# Tapping & Fibromyalgia

Tapping with bamboo is an ancient Chinese therapy that works wonders for your general well-being. It's a simple, pleasurable, yet hugely effective way to support and maintain your health, no matter what your age or physical state.

Tapping the skin on a daily basis enables the free flow of this all-important circulation. In as little as one minute a day, an all-over body tap can clear areas of stagnation, support lymphatic drainage and encourage a smooth flow of blood and qi around the body. Think of it as a natural battery charger for the body.

[View the Tapping Guide](#)

# Gua sha & Fibromyalgia

Gua sha is a therapeutic healing technique that has been widely practised in China for thousands of years. It involves using a round-edged tool, traditionally made from materials such as jade or metal, to pressstroke the skin until redness appears. You can even use a jam jar lid! Gua sha has been used to treat a whole range of conditions from fever to chronic cough and migraines. It has been shown in studies to increase micro-circulation by 400%, and clear inflammation. Note that gua sha should NOT be used directly on broken skin. However, it can be effective to lessen the marks left by an acne outbreak. There are lots of how-to gua sha videos on my Instagram feed; and you can also download the Gua Sha Guide.

[View the Gua sha Guide](#)

@katie\_brindle

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

[info@katiebrindle.com](mailto:info@katiebrindle.com)



# Specific advice

Any symptoms of ill health will always relate to one of the five key organs we consider when we are treating in Chinese medicine. These are Heart, Lung, Liver, Stomach/Spleen and Kidney.

Depending on what your symptoms are, it will usually indicate an imbalance in a specific organ. For example, palpitations are concerned with the heart.

An energetic imbalance does not mean you have a dramatic health issue. This aspect of Chinese medicine is about prevention, not cure. That means reading the subtle signs and symptoms of the body daily. Imbalance starts at an energetic level and you rectify it at an energetic level.

The more serious the symptoms, the deeper the imbalance. If the symptom is mild – e.g. low-level anxiety before a meeting or mild rosacea after a glass of red wine, the imbalance will be easier to rectify.

Gua sha is a therapeutic healing technique that has been widely practised in China for thousands of years. It involves using a round-edged tool, traditionally made from materials such as jade or metal, to press-stroke the skin until redness appears. You can even use a jam jar lid! Gua Sha has been used to treat a whole range of conditions from fever to chronic cough and migraines. It has been shown in studies to increase micro-circulation by 400%, clear inflammation. There are lots of how-to gua sha videos on my Instagram feed; and you can also download the Gua sha Guide.

@katie\_brindle

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

[info@katiebrindle.com](mailto:info@katiebrindle.com)



It is important to know that when I refer to organ imbalance, I mean energetic and not physical. So, for example, heart imbalance does not mean heart disease. It is a subtle signal that your body is not in balance and the strain of that is impacting your heart energy, which may eventually lead to an issue over time. In the first instance, it could be felt as low level anxiety, occasional palpitations or a lack of desire to socialise. We look for the low level signs to stop things getting a foothold in the body and causing a greater problem further down the line.

Use low levels symptoms as a barometer of your wellness. Address them to keep the body healthy and they are much less likely to become a deeper issue. This is the principle behind yang sheng and self-care.

Interestingly enough, since there is no cure for fibromyalgia in Western medicine, many treatments are based on Chinese medicine to help relieve some of the symptoms. The main objectives are to improve circulation, nurture the heart, strengthen the stomach and calm the mind. Improving circulation helps the flow of qi around the body and prevents the blockage of toxins. Nurturing the heart is important for fibromyalgia sufferers who need to find an emotional balance.

Strengthening the stomach helps us digest, assimilate and process everything that enters our bodies, including emotions. And calming the mind helps relax our nerves and bring us to a more harmonious state.

There are many techniques rooted in Chinese medicine that can help with fibromyalgia, including breathing, food therapy, qigong, bathing and foot bathing, combing, gua sha and concentrating on specific acupressure points.

[View the Stomach & Spleen Guide](#)

[View the Heart Guide](#)

@katie\_brindle

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

[info@katiebrindle.com](mailto:info@katiebrindle.com)





# Want to know more?

We will be delighted to support you as you continue along your Yang Sheng journey. The following will get you started:

'Yang Sheng: The Art of Chinese Self-Healing' available on Amazon, Waterstone and [www.hayoumethod.com](http://www.hayoumethod.com)

Download Yang Sheng Book

Qigong Healing classes (3 x each week) for a more in-depth and healing practice – full details on [www.hayoufit.com](http://www.hayoufit.com)

Free Masterclass "[Master Your Health](#)" – understand the 3- step plan for preventative health. Find more Qigong Masterclasses [here](#).

Free self-care weekly content [@katiebrindle](#) on Instagram, Facebook and YouTube.

Free regular gua sha demonstrations on [@thehayoumethod](#) Instagram & the opportunity to purchase the accompanying tools from [www.hayoumethod.com](http://www.hayoumethod.com)

## DISCLAIMER:

Please note that any of these Yang Sheng techniques are designed to support your overall self-care and wellbeing and should not be used as a substitute for any Western medical advice or treatment that you may be receiving. You should not use the information in this Guide or on our website for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease and must always consult your doctor if you have any health concerns. Additionally, please note that there are a few contraindications to Yang Sheng techniques, so please visit [www.hayoumethod.com](http://www.hayoumethod.com) to view our comprehensive FAQs.

[@katie\\_brindle](#)  
[katiebrindle.com](http://katiebrindle.com)  
[info@katiebrindle.com](mailto:info@katiebrindle.com)