

*The Massachusetts CFIDS/ME & FM Association does not assume any responsibility for the outcome of treatments or other self-care strategies described in any of the listed books, that might be undertaken by readers and we recommend individuals always consult with their healthcare providers before trying any new treatment, supplement, or healthcare product.*

## Pain and Pain Management

[Pain Free 1-2-3: A Proven Program for Eliminating Chronic Pain Now](#)

[Trigger Point Therapy for Low Back Pain: A Self-treatment Workbook \(New Harbinger Self-Help Workbook\)](#)

[Sciatica Solutions: Diagnosis, Treatment, and Cure of Spinal and Piriformis Problems](#)

**Pain Free 1-2-3: A Proven Program for Eliminating Chronic Pain Now**, by Jacob Teitelbaum, MD, 2005, ISBN: 0071464573.

Pain 1-2-3 is another informative and engaging book to come from Dr. Jacob Teitelbaum, author of the well-known guide for CFS/CFIDS and ME and Fibromyalgia (FM), *From Fatigued to Fantastic* (now in its 3rd edition). The target audience for this particular book consists of individuals with FM, myofascial pain or chronic pain. Though Dr. Teitelbaum touched on the importance of decreasing or eliminating pain when someone has CFS/CFIDS/ME and/or FM in all the editions of his first book, this book allows him to expand on this topic and it nicely complements the first series.

Dr. Teitelbaum starts out by explaining what sorts of things can help to promote healing and repair tissues as well as what sort of things may put stress on one's body and cause pain. The treatment strategy formulated by Dr. Teitelbaum (which he claims can eliminate chronic pain) includes recommendations such as: striving to get the best possible nutrition and quality sleep,

correcting one's hormonal deficiencies, learning how to identify and eliminate pain triggers (including getting treated for any persistent infections since they put a strain on the immune system), and learning about the many types of pain and how to deal with each of these.

The second half of the book summarizes numerous treatment options, including herbal /natural remedies and alternative therapies, prescription therapies, and/or a combination of both approaches. He also states the best order in which to try these and how they will be most beneficial. (It is understood that treatments should be pursued while under the care of one's doctor.)

Though this book offers a lot of practical information, the way it is marketed (i.e., the flashy titles, making things sound so easy to do, or making rather incredible claims) is a negative and may actually discourage interest in this book. It is not clear why Dr. Teitelbaum has chosen this type of delivery style considering his extensive knowledge about CFS/CFIDS/ME and FM and chronic pain as the medical director of the Center for Effective CFS/Fibromyalgia Therapies in Maryland. On the positive side, if readers can get past the packaging, they will appreciate the value of the information in this book and will sense the author's optimism and desire to enlighten readers.

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***Trigger Point Therapy for Low Back Pain: A Self-treatment Workbook (New Harbinger Self-Help Workbook)***, by Sharon Sauer, CMTPT, LMT and Mary Biancalana, MS, CMTPT, LMT, 2009, ISBN: 1572245638.

As the title implies, this book is intended for individuals who suffer from low back pain and who would like to learn more about what is causing their pain and find out what they could do to alleviate some of the pain. The type of pain discussed in this book is muscle pain, more specifically, pain coming from the tightening of the myofascia—the thin, fibrous tissue that encloses layers of muscles and supports the musculature of the body. Changes within this tissue present as “trigger points” which are painful knots that develop in the muscle fiber and cause constriction of nerves and blood vessels and this in turn, causes pain and referred pain.

Myofascial trigger point therapy is a type of bodywork done by medical practitioners and/or trained therapists using manual and physical techniques to find (through palpation) and reduce these knots and myofascial constriction, but considerable relief can be also achieved at home though various self-applied methods. Therefore, this book contains what two knowledgeable therapists in this field and members of the International Myopain Society, Sharon Sauer and

Mary Biancalana, want to share with readers.

The authors write from personal and professional experience and are very careful and sensible in how they communicate with readers. Their first recommendation is that anyone with low back pain be thoroughly evaluated by a primary care physician and/or specialist for all possible causes. Patients are also urged to get their doctors' approval before participating in any of the home exercises and/or seeking therapy from licensed practitioners using this discipline.

This is a very user-friendly book, which is not overly long (as it concentrates only on muscle groups involved in lower back muscle pain), and in which the information is conveniently broken down into 17 small chapters. Once the basics are covered, a chapter is devoted to each of the ten specific muscle groups associated with low back and/or buttock pain, as well as trigger points that are activated and causing pain.

Symptoms and patterns of muscle pain/referred pain for each group are well explained and in many cases, accompanied by illustrations and diagrams. One chapter, in particular, seems very helpful because it provides a reference chart listing general problems and the muscle groups associated with these, including a notation as to which chapter discusses this particular muscle group.

Treatment recommendations, within each chapter for each muscle group, consist mainly of helpful stretches, ways to apply pressure against painful areas and promote release of knots, range of motion exercises with easy to follow diagrams, and instructions for how to use self-care tools and other therapies (i.e., backnobber, therapy balls, pillows, use of heat, etc.).

This book is effective in enlightening readers about myofascial pain and trigger point therapy. As mentioned before, content is limited to the lower back muscle groups. It is important to note this book solely concentrates on trigger point therapy and this type of pain and it does not include any information on fibromyalgia in particular. We do not think this is a problem because the at-home techniques and tips could be beneficial and this type of intervention has been included in recent fibromyalgia publications.

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***Sciatica Solutions: Diagnosis, Treatment, and Cure of Spinal and Piriformis Problems***, by Loren Fishman, MD and Carol Ardman, 2006, ISBN: 0393330419.

Dr. Loren Fishman, a specialist in rehabilitation medicine, researcher and professor at Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons, and his wife, Carol Ardman, a freelance writer and editor, wrote this book because of the misunderstanding that surrounds sciatica and associated problems. This is a genuine problem noticed by Dr. Fishman himself, who has over thirty years of clinical experience. Therefore, they wanted to provide a book which clarifies this type of pain, explains how to better recognize it, reviews the kind of tests or care one might consider getting for it, and explains the wide range of treatment options, both conventional and alternative.

This is not a book about general back pain, which is often muscular in nature, but one that focuses on sciatica—a pain, neurological in origin, that typically runs along the sciatic nerve and causes distinct set of symptoms and pain patterns in the buttocks and the legs (i.e., numbness, “electric shocks”, and other peculiar sensations).

The book is divided into two parts. In the first part, Dr. Fishman goes over the multiple causes of sciatic-type pain and describes how it feels, but also differentiates it from other conditions which are often mistaken for it.

One chapter reviews basic components and functions of the nervous system (i.e., the interaction of the brain, spinal cord, the nerve fibers and nerve roots). Of particular interest are the illustrations of the spine, nerve root patterns and diagnostic diagrams.

Another chapter is dedicated to the diagnostic and nerve function tests used to diagnose sciatica-related problems or to evaluate nerve damage.

The last chapter in the first part offers an extensive review of the conditions associated with sciatica. Here too, the in-depth explanation of the Piriformis Syndrome—a condition affecting the buttocks when the sciatic nerve becomes entrapped and compressed, was found to be especially informative and unique to this book.

The second part of the book deals with treatment options and many things that patients can do on their own. It is understood that patients will have first sought appropriate medical care and evaluation from their primary care providers or specialists.

Recommendations include such things as strengthening abdominal, torso and core muscles, becoming educated about different exercise/movement techniques, and paying attention to daily routines, posture, and even one's clothing, handbags and footwear.

Medical treatments, such as physical therapy, medical devices, and various mechanical techniques are reviewed.

An overview is provided on frequently used medications, injections and other invasive treatments, as well as various surgical procedures (including brief descriptions and reasons for these surgeries).

The book concludes with many types of nonmedical alternative techniques and the importance of nutrition and lifestyle changes. Dr. Fishman is a strong proponent of alternative treatments, like yoga, and promoting patient education.

This book is easy to read and comprehend, even though it contains some technical information. The authors have done a good job in how they have explained or illustrated this information. Their writing style is friendly and speaks to the readers.

This book would be especially beneficial for individuals who are just starting out with sciatica, because it provides them with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions. Individuals who might already be receiving medical care for this problem will find parts of this book helpful because it provides a better understanding about the mechanisms driving the pain and offers additional ways to manage it.

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