**[Fibromyalgia – Medical Marijuana Research Overview](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/fibromyalgia-medical-marijuana-research/)**

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*Fibromyalgia is a disorder characterized by intense musculoskeletal pain that affects 5 million Americans. Studies have shown marijuana effectively lowers pain levels and improves quality of sleep in patients.*

**Overview of Fibromyalgia**

Fibromyalgia is a common disorder characterized by widespread pain and fatigue that primarily affects women. The disorder can greatly affect a person’s abilities to perform daily activities and causes sleep problems. According to Mayo Clinic, having fibromyalgia affects the way the brain processes pain signals and makes painful sensations feel amplified.

In addition to pain, fatigue and sleep problems, those with fibromyalgia may also experience cognitive and memory problems, headaches, morning stiffness, painful menstrual periods, numbness or tingling, restless legs syndrome, temperature to sensitivity, irritable bowel syndrome, and depression.

The causes of fibromyalgia remain unknown, but the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases notes that many people associate their fibromyalgia to a physically or emotionally stressful or traumatic event. Repetitive injuries or illnesses are also commonly associated to fibromyalgia by patients. Others claim the disorder developed spontaneously.

There is no cure of fibromyalgia, so treatment focus is on controlling symptoms with pain relievers, antidepressants, exercise and therapy.

**Findings: Effects of Cannabis on Fibromyalgia**

The cannabinoids contained in cannabis have both analgesic and sleep-promoting effects to help fibromyalgia patients manage symptoms. Studies have found that cannabis is effective at improving sleep disruption, pain, depression, joint stiffness, anxiety, physical function and quality of life in individuals with fibromyalgia (de Souza Nascimento, et al., 2013) (Russo, 2004).

While fibromyalgia is known for causing intense and unrelenting musculoskeletal pain, cannabis has proven effective at offering fibromyalgia patients relief. Fibromyalgia patients treated with cannabis and assessed over a seven-month period experienced significant pain intensity improvements and were able to reduce their doses of opioids (Weber, et al., 2009). One study discovered that after four weeks of cannabis treatment, fibromyalgia patients experienced significantly less pain and anxiety whereas a placebo group saw no improvements (Skrabek, Galimova, Ethans & Perry, 2008). Another study reported significant reductions in pain and stiffness, an enhancement of relaxation and an increase in somnolence and feeling of well being in fibromyalgia patients two hours after they smoked or orally consumed cannabis (Fiz, et al., 2011).

Cannabis has also been found to be effective at improving sleep quality in patients with fibromyalgia (Ware, Fitzcharles, Joseph & Shir, 2010).

**States That Have Approved Medical Marijuana for Fibromyalgia**

Only the states of [Arkansas](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/arkansas-marijuana-laws/), [Illinois](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/illinois-marijuana-laws/), [North Dakota](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/north-dakota-marijuana-laws/) and [Ohio](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/ohio-marijuana-laws/) have approved medical marijuana specifically for the treatment of fibromyalgia.

However, several states have approved medical marijuana specifically to treat “chronic pain,” a symptom commonly associated with fibromyalgia. These states include: [Alaska](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/alaska-marijuana-laws/), [Arizona](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/arizona-marijuana-laws/), [California](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/california-marijuana-laws/), [Colorado](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/colorado-marijuana-laws/), [Delaware](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/delaware-marijuana-laws/), [Hawaii](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/hawaii-marijuana-laws/), [Maine](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/maine-marijuana-laws/), [Maryland](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/maryland-marijuana-laws/), [Michigan](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/michigan-marijuana-laws/), [Montana](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/montana-marijuana-laws/), [New Mexico](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/new-mexico-marijuana-laws/), [Ohio](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/ohio-marijuana-laws/), [Oregon](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/oregon-marijuana-laws/), [Pennsylvania](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/pennsylvania-marijuana-laws/), [Rhode Island](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/rhode-island-marijuana-laws/) and [Vermont](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/vermont-marijuana-laws/). The states of [Nevada](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/nevada-marijuana-laws/), [New Hampshire](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/new-hampshire-marijuana-laws/), [North Dakota](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/north-dakota-marijuana-laws/), [Montana](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/montana-marijuana-laws/), [Ohio](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/ohio-marijuana-laws/) and [Vermont](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/vermont-marijuana-laws/) allow medical marijuana to treat “severe pain.” The states of [Arkansas](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/arkansas-marijuana-laws/), [Minnesota](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/minnesota-marijuana-laws/), [Ohio](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/ohio-marijuana-laws/), [Pennsylvania](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/pennsylvania-marijuana-laws/) and [Washington](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/washington-marijuana-laws/) have approved cannabis for the treatment of “intractable pain.”

Sixteen states have approved medical marijuana for the treatment of spasms. These states include: [Arizona](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/arizona-marijuana-laws/), [Arkansas](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/arkansas-marijuana-laws/), [California](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/california-marijuana-laws/), [Colorado](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/colorado-marijuana-laws/), [Delaware](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/delaware-marijuana-laws/), [Florida](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/florida-marijuana-laws/), [Hawaii](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/hawaii-marijuana-laws/), [Maryland](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/maryland-marijuana-laws/), [Michigan](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/michigan-marijuana-laws/), [Minnesota](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/minnesota-marijuana-laws/), [Montana](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/montana-marijuana-laws/), [Nevada](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/nevada-marijuana-laws/), [New Hampshire](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/new-hampshire-marijuana-laws/), [Oregon](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/oregon-marijuana-laws/), [Rhode Island](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/rhode-island-marijuana-laws/) and [Washington](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/washington-marijuana-laws/).

A number of other states will consider allowing medical marijuana to be used for the treatment of fibromyalgia with the recommendation by a physician. These states include: [California](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/california-marijuana-laws/) (any debilitating illness where the medical use of marijuana has been recommended by a physician), [Connecticut](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/connecticut-marijuana-laws/) (other medical conditions may be approved by the Department of Consumer Protection), [Massachusetts](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/massachusetts-marijuana-laws/) (other conditions as determined in writing by a qualifying patient’s physician), [Nevada](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/nevada-marijuana-laws/) (other conditions subject to approval), [Oregon](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/oregon-marijuana-laws/) (other conditions subject to approval), [Rhode Island](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/rhode-island-marijuana-laws/) (other conditions subject to approval), and [Washington](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/washington-marijuana-laws/) (any “terminal or debilitating condition”).

In [Washington D.C.](http://www.medicalmarijuanainc.com/washington-dc-marijuana-law/), any condition can be approved for medical marijuana as long as a DC-licensed physician recommends the treatment.

**Recent Studies on Cannabis’ Effect on Fibromyalgia**

* **Fibromyalgia patients experienced significant reductions in pain and stiffness, an enhancement of relaxation, and an increase in somnolence and feeling of well being, two hours after smoking or orally consuming cannabis.**  
  *Cannabis use in patients with fibromyalgia: effect on symptoms relief and health-related quality of life.*  
  (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3080871/>)
* **Cannabis medication found effective at improving sleep quality and was well tolerated by fibromyalgia patients.**  
  *The effects of nabilone on sleep in fibromyalgia: results of a randomized controlled trial.*   
  (<http://journals.lww.com/anesthesia-analgesia/pages/articleviewer.aspx?year=2010&issue=02000&article=00056&type=abstract>)
* **Four weeks of cannabis treatment caused significant decreases in pain and anxiety in patients with fibromyalgia.**  
  *Nabilone for the treatment of pain in fibromyalgia.*  
  (<http://www.jpain.org/article/S1526-5900(07)00873-5/fulltext>)

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