

# Diagnosing Fibromyalgia

## Using the American College of Rheumatology (ACR) Criteria and the Manual Tender Point Survey

### According to American College of Rheumatology (ACR) criteria, Fibromyalgia can be diagnosed if<sup>1</sup>

1. The patient has experienced widespread pain for 3 months or more in all 4 quadrants of the body.

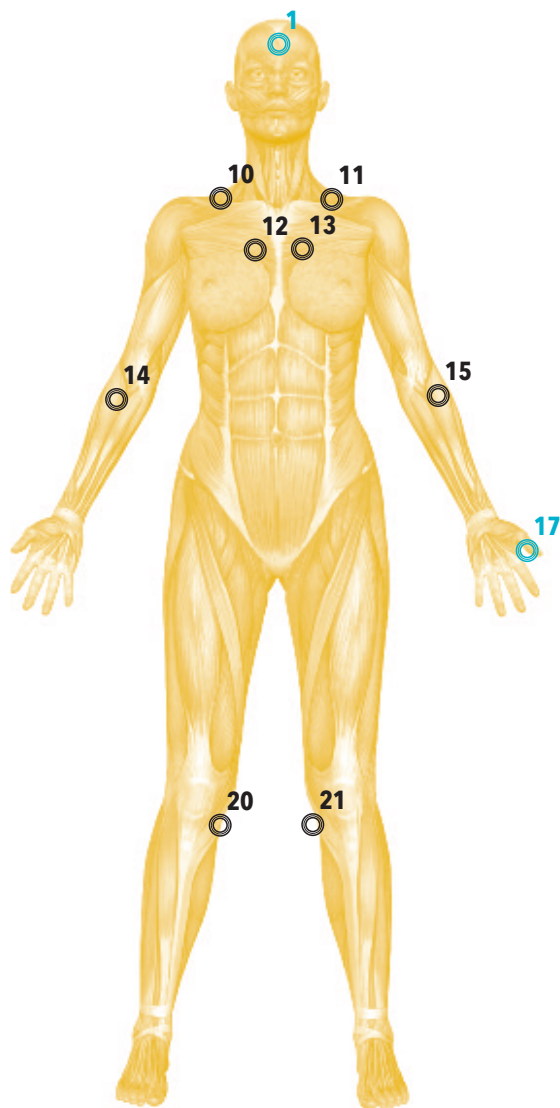
Widespread pain is defined as:

- Pain above and below the waist       Pain on the left and right sides of the body       Pain in the axial skeleton

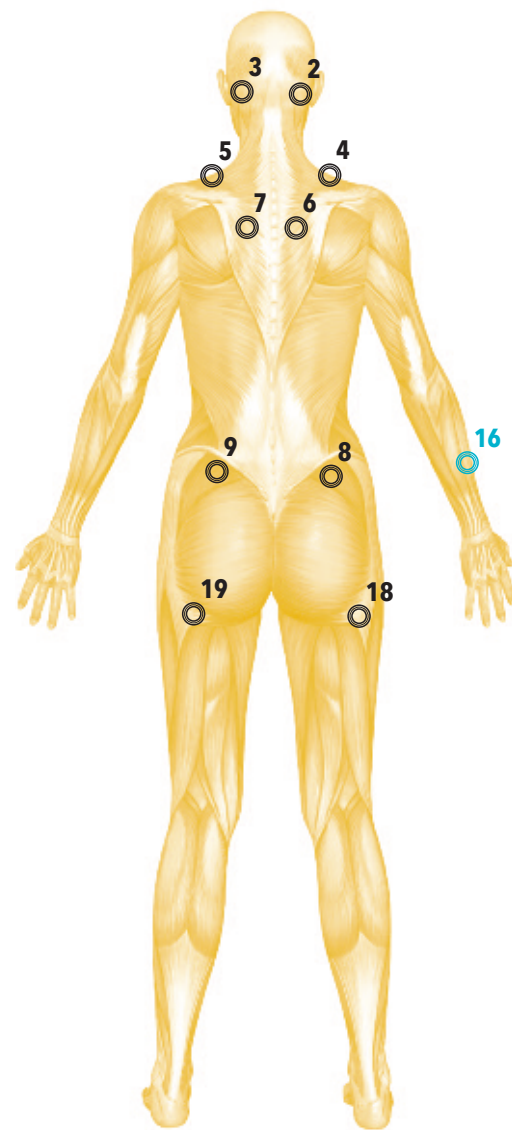
(All 3 conditions above must be present to fit the definition of widespread pain.)

2. The patient experiences pain on palpation in at least 11 of 18 tender points. (Note that survey sites 1, 16, and 17 are control points and do not count toward the total number of painful tender points.)

### Manual Tender Point Survey Sites<sup>2</sup>



Front



Back

**1 Mid-forehead (control point)**

**2, 3 Occiput:** Suboccipital muscle insertions

**4, 5 Trapezius:** Midpoint of upper border

**6, 7 Supraspinatus:** Above medial border of scapular spine

**8, 9 Gluteal:** Upper outer quadrant of buttocks

**10,11 Low cervical:** Anterior aspect of intertransverse space of C5-7

**12,13 Second rib:** Second costochondral junction

**14,15 Lateral epicondyle:** 2 cm distal to epicondyle

**16 Right forearm (control point):** Junction of proximal  $\frac{2}{3}$  & distal  $\frac{1}{3}$

**17 Left thumbnail (control point)**

**18,19 Greater trochanter:** Posterior to trochanteric prominence

**20,21 Knee:** Medial fat pad proximal to the joint line

### How to perform the Manual Tender Point Survey<sup>2</sup>

1. Locate each survey site visually, and then with light palpation. (Note that survey sites include 18 tender points and 3 control points.)
2. Use the thumb pad of your dominant hand to apply pressure perpendicularly.
3. Gradually increase thumb pressure until you reach a pressure of 4 kg/cm<sup>2</sup> (enough to whiten your fingernail).
4. Each survey site should be pressed once for a total of 4 seconds.
5. After applying pressure at the site, ask the patient whether there was any pain and ask her/him to rate the intensity of pain on a scale of 0 to 10 (0 = no pain; 10 = worst pain).
6. Record the number of positive tender points (those with a score of 2 or greater).

**If the patient experiences widespread pain for 3 months or more, and pain in at least 11 of 18 tender points, Fibromyalgia can be diagnosed.**

**References:** 1. Wolfe F, Smythe HA, Yunus MB, et al. The American College of Rheumatology 1990 criteria for the classification of fibromyalgia. Report of the Multicenter Criteria Committee. *Arthritis Rheum.* 1990;33(2):160-172.  
2. Okifuji A, Turk DC, Sinclair JD, Starz TW, Marcus DA. A standardized manual tender point survey. I. Development and determination of a threshold point for the identification of positive tender points in fibromyalgia syndrome. *J Rheumatol.* 1997;24(2):377-383.

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