

STEP 1: LIST OF SYMPTOMS

CHECK EACH ITEM ON THIS LIST and write down at what age you were when each set of symptoms first appeared in your life.

| <u>Age of onset</u> | <u>Symptom</u> |
|---------------------|--|
| _____ | Heartburn, acid reflux |
| _____ | Abdominal pains |
| _____ | Irritable bowel syndrome |
| _____ | Tension headaches |
| _____ | Migraine headaches |
| _____ | Unexplained rashes |
| _____ | Anxiety and/or panic attacks |
| _____ | Depression |
| _____ | Obsessive-compulsive thought patterns |
| _____ | Eating disorders |
| _____ | Insomnia or trouble sleeping |
| _____ | Fibromyalgia |
| _____ | Back pain |
| _____ | Neck pain |
| _____ | Shoulder pain |
| _____ | Repetitive stress injury |
| _____ | Carpal tunnel syndrome |
| _____ | Reflex sympathetic dystrophy (RSD) |
| _____ | Temporomandibular joint syndrome (TMJ) |
| _____ | Chronic tendonitis |
| _____ | Facial pain |
| _____ | Numbness, tingling sensations |
| _____ | Fatigue or chronic fatigue syndrome |
| _____ | Palpitations |
| _____ | Chest pain |
| _____ | Hyperventilation |
| _____ | Interstitial cystitis / irritable bladder |
| _____ | Pelvic pain |
| _____ | Muscle tenderness |
| _____ | Postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS) |
| _____ | Tinnitus |
| _____ | Dizziness |
| _____ | Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) |

STEP 2: LIFE STRESSORS

AGES OF EVENTS

EVENT

Ever been in a serious disaster (e.g., an earthquake, hurricane, large fire, explosion)?

Ever seen a serious accident (for example, a bad car wreck or an on-the-job accident)?

Had a very serious accident or injury (a bad car wreck- on-the-job accident)?

Was a close family member ever sent to jail?

Have you ever been sent to jail?

Were you ever put in foster care or put up for adoption?

Did your parents ever separate or divorce while you were living with them?

Have you ever been separated or divorced?

Ever had serious money problems (not enough money for food or a place to live)?

Ever had a very serious physical or mental illness?

Ever been emotionally abused or neglected (frequently shamed, embarrassed, ignored, or repeatedly told that you were “no good”)?

Ever been physically neglected (for example, not fed, not properly clothed, or left to take care of yourself when you were too young or ill)?

Have you ever had an abortion or miscarriage (lost your baby)?

Have you ever been separated from your child against your will (for example, the loss of custody/visitation or kidnapping)?

Has a baby or child of yours ever had a severe physical or mental handicap?

Have you ever been responsible for taking care of someone close to you (not your child) who had a severe physical or mental handicap?

Has someone close to you died suddenly or unexpectedly?

Has someone close to you died?

Ever see violence between family members (e.g., hitting, kicking, slapping, punching)?

Ever seen a robbery, mugging, or attack taking place?

Ever been robbed, mugged, or attacked (not sexually) by someone you did not know?

Ever been abused or physically attacked (not sexually) by someone you knew?

Ever been bothered or harassed by sexual remarks, jokes, or demands for sexual favors by someone at work or school?

Ever touched or made to touch someone else in a sexual way because he/she forced you in some way or threatened to harm you if you didn't?

Ever have sex (oral, anal, genital) when you didn't want to because someone forced you in some way or threatened to hurt you if you didn't?

Have any of the events mentioned above ever happened to someone close to you so that even though you didn't experience it yourself, you were seriously upset by it?

STEP 3: CORE ISSUES

Once you have carefully and honestly reviewed the stresses in your life, you will likely begin to see patterns. You will be able to identify your “core issues,” those issues that have been stored in your subconscious mind and that are most likely to trigger the onset of physical and psychological symptoms. Indicate which of the following patterns apply to you, or describe any other patterns that apply to you.

**Check
all
that
apply**

CORE ISSUES

- _____ Loss and abandonment (losing a parent or sibling, divorce, moving)
- _____ Never feeling loved or cared for
- _____ Not trusting others; concerned that others will take advantage of you
- _____ Avoiding being too close, touching, or connected with others
- _____ Conflicts or struggles over sexual behaviors, identity, or relationships
- _____ Not fitting in or feeling ostracized (being teased or picked on, being shy and reserved, not being athletic or popular)
- _____ Feeling pressure to succeed or be perfect (from parents, other family members, church or religious organizations, or self)
- _____ Feeling inferior to siblings or other relatives (not as beautiful, funny, athletic, interesting, accomplished)
- _____ Never feeling good enough, having to “earn” love from parents, feeling criticized much of the time
- _____ Resentment and/or anger towards family members, religious leaders, neighbors
- _____ Learning to be anxious, worried, or insecure
- _____ Identifying with one or several family members and trying to copy or imitate them or trying to be different from one or several family members
- _____ Other patterns:

STEP 4: FINDING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN SYMPTOMS, LIFE STRESSORS, & CORE ISSUES

Once you have identified your core issues, review the list of potential stress-related symptoms above.

Below, list the times in your life when you developed any of these symptoms, in chronological order. Think carefully about what events occurred just prior to or during the onset of symptoms. You will typically find that the symptoms began at or shortly after you experienced something that was stressful and that reminded you of your core issues (triggering your emotional speed dial), and you felt trapped in that situation. List each symptom, then write down the triggering events or situations, and the emotions and/or core issues which caused the symptoms to occur.

When you place the symptoms and diagnoses that have occurred next to the life stressors, see what patterns emerge and what connections you can make. This is a critical step in figuring out why you have chronic pain and fibromyalgia. Do this for each of these symptoms. For each symptom, think carefully about what was going on in your life at the time this symptom began. What events had occurred that bothered you? What emotions did you feel? How were these events or emotions similar to those you experienced in childhood? Which core issues might have been triggered? Did you feel trapped in some way, either physically or verbally (meaning that you were unable to respond or express what you felt)?

Be as open and honest as you can in this process. Often it is very obvious that stressful life events in childhood have created the emotional memories of hurt, loss, fear, guilt, or anger, and it is equally obvious that certain stressors later in life triggered stress-related symptoms. However, sometimes it takes a fair amount of introspection and searching to find the connections. It is common for mild stressors in adult life to trigger significant symptoms if the stressor is related to earlier stressors, particularly from childhood. Neglect or lack of love by a parent can create a childhood hurt that can get triggered later in life by seemingly small yet significant interactions.

| Age | Symptom(s) | Stressors | Core Issues |
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