

FLARE UPS
by
Cathy Covell, PT
Motion for Life ■ www.motionforlife.net
Paoli Myofascial Release Center, Coverage therapist

Many times patients are progressing along, and they have a flare up (of course this goes for all of us too!). As we know, it could be what is called a healing crisis—things many times get worse before they get better. It can be very frustrating when this occurs, but it is part of the healing process. This phase has part to do with the mind-body connection or the mind-body communication.

Here's the mind's perspective: "So, here I am progressing along in therapy. The body is finally starting to open up. I can feel the shifts; I am starting to feel good! The body is finally starting to let me do the things I want to do! Then I do something that I think is insignificant—like walk 5 more minutes, or do some extra household chores—and wham! That crazy body has a full blown flare up. I even feel signs and symptoms that I haven't felt in months. What's up with that!?"

Well, let's look at this from our bodies' perspective. I am finally starting to get some release from the restrictions that have been crushing me. Then, the mind decides to push me more than normal, and then I get scared. Here I am, finally starting to make some progress and that darn mind is trying to get me to do something that feels bad again. I have learned over time that the only way to get the mind to stop, is with a full blown sensory overload. In other words, I'm sending out the full alarm, or the full pain, signal. Because I know that the only way the mind will stop is if it is really hurting. And I am tired of hurting, I'm ready to heal.

Most of us over the years have learned to shut down the communication between our mind and our body. We are taught not to show emotions, to push through pain, to discount our intuition, etc. The only form of communication that can get our attention anymore is pain. And we've gotten so good at tuning that out, that the pain has to spread and become more intense to get our attention.

So, now we are starting to gain some awareness and tune into our bodies. Well, let's just say that this new communication can be a little fragile. At times, it may seem like our mind and bodies have been at war with each other. The mind feels the body let it down because the body can't do the things the mind wants to. The body feels the mind has let it down because it makes it do things that hurt it.

It's going to take time before these two systems are going to trust each other again. And in the process, there will be battles for control, and also emotions that will come to the surface. The only way the body will start trusting the mind again, is by the actions that we take. When the body starts sending out signals, do we listen or ignore them? Do we take time to self treat and to really give full attention to our bodies?

As this communication improves, and trust is established, the body won't need to hit the full alarms. The body will start sending more subtle messages—little pressure, or tightness—and we will now be open enough to feel these sensations and use them for guidance. Again, the key is feeling. Feeling the sensation fully and letting it guide you where you need to go. This may mean doing self treatment, journaling, or feeling some emotion that needs to be felt.

So, embrace the struggles, and remember to feel the hurt. Both sides in this battle feel they have been wronged, and they both need some love and healing. The end result is definitely worth it!



1831 Orange Ave., Suite B, Costa Mesa, CA 92627
(949) 642-3424
www.serenitywellnessctr.com