

Mind Body Syndrome Checklist

First, I would suggest that you review the list of symptoms and diagnoses that are likely to be caused by MBS/TMS. Determine how many of these you have. If you have had two or three or more of these during the course of your life, then it is more likely that you have MBS/TMS. It is very common for MBS/TMS symptoms to start in childhood or the teen years. Many people develop headaches, stomach aches, dizziness, fatigue, anxiety or other symptoms while they are young and then later in life develop back or neck pain, fibromyalgia, irritable bowel syndrome or other syndromes.

Create a list of all of the potentially MBS/TMS symptoms or diagnoses that you have had at some point in your life. Symptoms that may be caused by MBS/TMS are listed below. Check those that apply and then arrange them from first to last, i.e. chronologically, in your life. Of course, it is important to recognize that these symptoms can also be caused by medical diseases that are not MBS/TMS.

- | | <u>Began when</u> |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. Heartburn, acid reflux | _____ |
| 2. Ulcer symptoms or stomach pains | _____ |
| 3. Hiatal hernia | _____ |
| 4. Irritable bowel syndrome | _____ |
| 5. Colitis, spastic colon | _____ |
| 6. Tension headache | _____ |
| 7. Migraine headache | _____ |
| 8. Eczema | _____ |
| 9. Anxiety symptoms and/or panic attacks | _____ |
| 10. Depression | _____ |
| 11. Obsessive-compulsive thought patterns | _____ |
| 12. Eating disorders | _____ |
| 13. Insomnia or trouble sleeping | _____ |
| 14. Fibromyalgia | _____ |
| 15. Back pain | _____ |
| 16. Neck pain | _____ |
| 17. Shoulder pain | _____ |
| 18. Repetitive stress injury | _____ |
| 19. Reflex sympathetic dystrophy (RSD) | _____ |
| 20. Temporo-mandibular joint syndrome (TMJ) | _____ |
| 21. Chronic tendonitis | _____ |
| 22. Carpal tunnel syndrome | _____ |
| 23. Trigeminal neuralgia, facial pain | _____ |
| 24. Numbness, paresthesias | _____ |
| 25. Fatigue or Chronic fatigue syndrome | _____ |
| 26. Palpitations | _____ |
| 27. Chest pain | _____ |
| 28. Hyperventilation | _____ |
| 29. Spastic bladder | _____ |

- 30. Interstitial cystitis _____
- 31. Prostate problems _____
- 32. Pelvic pain _____
- 33. Muscle tenderness _____
- 34. Tachycardia or low blood pressure _____
- 35. Tinnitus _____
- 36. Dizziness _____

History of stressors

Please **make a check** which of the following occurred around the time your symptoms (Sx) began **or** has occurred recently or is currently present:

	<u>Occurred when Sx began</u>	<u>Recent or Current</u>
1. Illness or death in your family or friends	_____	_____
2. Divorce or marital problems	_____	_____
3. Legal problems	_____	_____
4. Accident or injury	_____	_____
5. New relationship or marriage	_____	_____
6. Difficulties at work or change in job or business	_____	_____
7. Gain of a new family member or change in the family structure	_____	_____
8. Change in financial situation	_____	_____
9. Change in living situation	_____	_____
10. Violent experiences	_____	_____
11. Changes in sexual functioning or other issues regarding sex	_____	_____

Have you had any traumatic or violent experiences in childhood? Yes/No

Did you feel loved and nurtured as a child? Yes/No

Have you had significant losses or feelings of being abandoned? Yes/No

Were you happy as a child? Did you fit in and have close friends as a child? Yes/No

What words would you use to describe your father?

What words would you use to describe your mother?

Personality Traits/Psychological factors

These factors are commonly seen in people with MBS/TMS. Check those that apply to you.

Please check if you would describe yourself as:

1. Having low self-esteem _____
2. Being a perfectionist _____
3. Having high expectations of yourself _____
4. Wanting to be good and/or be liked _____
5. Frequently hostile and/or aggressive _____
6. Frequently feeling guilt _____
7. Feeling dependent on others _____
8. Being conscientious _____
9. Being hard on yourself _____
10. Being overly responsible _____
11. Often responsible for others _____
12. Having rage or resentment _____
13. Worrying, being anxious or afraid _____
14. Being sad _____

Take the lists that you just created and consider them. Place the symptoms and diagnoses that have occurred next to the life stresses and see if a pattern emerges. This is a critical step in figuring out if you have MBS/TMS. Be as open and honest as you can in this process. Be aware that it is common for mild stressors to trigger significant symptoms if the stressor is related to earlier (often childhood) stressors. Neglect or lack of love by a parent can create a childhood “hurt” that can get triggered later in life by seemingly mild interactions. For example, a woman who felt that her mother never really nurtured her and was often off “playing bridge and tennis” developed fibromyalgia at a mildly stressful time in her life (building a new home and raising two small children). When I asked what her mom was doing at the time, she just started to sob, because her mom was still playing bridge and tennis, i.e. not nurturing her and more importantly, not nurturing her children.

Consider these examples of life experiences that have caused MBS/TMS in others. See if any of these patterns seem to apply to you.

A 35-year-old man developed pain in his groin one day, which persisted for 3 years despite seeing multiple doctors (including neurologists, urologists, anesthesiologists, and pain specialists). Upon thinking about the initial incident, his sister had died suddenly

two weeks prior to the onset of the pain and the night before the pain started, he had been to a bachelor's party and had engaged in "erotic massage" which made him feel guilty because of his sister's recent death.

A 45-year-old woman developed stomach pains and anxiety attacks in the fall one year after her husband died. He was terminally ill and she had to decide about "pulling the plug" on him which she felt conflicted with her religious beliefs. Each fall, her pains returned and increased. Multiple GI specialists saw her, but no one could tell her the cause of her pain nor help her with it. Through this program, she learned that her feelings about her husband's death caused her pain and it turned out that her anxiety attacks were generally in the afternoon; the same time of day that he passed.

A 48-year-old woman developed fibromyalgia symptoms at a time in her life when her 3 teenagers were very busy and demanding of her time, her husband took another job and worked extra hours, and her mother-in-law and her brother both moved in with her. She had wanted to go back to school, but the extra pressures from all these events caused her to feel trapped and obligated to too many people all at once.

A 22-year-old woman developed leg pains and numbness one summer. She was working as a full time nanny for two children, whom she adored. That summer, the family had a new baby who cried much of the time and was often inconsolable. The pains became so severe that she had to quit her job. Her physical reaction to the stressful situation caused her to get out of that situation. This is a common theme.

A woman developed migraine headaches as a child (after her parents divorced) and then developed interstitial cystitis as an adult after her own divorce.

A man developed fibromyalgia after his son told him that he was "gay," moved out, and started smoking.

A woman developed pain in her buttocks area after her husband retired, even though they have a very good relationship.

Sometimes it is very difficult to see the connection between life events and MBS/TMS symptoms. Frequently, it is the unconscious mind that produces the pains. In my own life, I developed neck pain after my daughter was born. She was our first child and I was extremely happy at the time. However, this event complicated our lives. I was busy with work, busy at home and then my daughter didn't sleep well at night. I was up several times trying to get her to sleep, walking up and down the stairs with her and trying to decide whether to let her cry at night or pick her up (my wife and I disagreed on this point). When I look back upon this time, I realize I was quite stressed and also feeling significant resentment at the changes in my life. However, I had no outlet for that resentment, not wanting to take out that resentment on my daughter, my wife or my work. I started waking up in the mornings with neck pain.

Now take an open and honest look at your life. Most people with MBS/TMS can begin to see patterns emerging. MBS/TMS disorders typically occur in people who have had significant stressful experiences (often in childhood). The symptoms usually start at times of stress, whether the stress was recognized or not, and often the emotions that lead to occurrences of MBS/TMS are unconscious, i.e. we are often not aware of the anger, fear, guilt, sense of loss or abandonment that is triggering the physical or emotional symptoms. Consider what might be some of the keys to putting together a story that makes sense and helps to explain the onset of your MBS/TMS syndromes.

If this exercise makes it clear to you that you have MBS/TMS and if you can begin to see the connections between your life experiences and your symptoms, then you are probably a good candidate for this Mind Body Educational Program. If you are not sure if you have MBS/TMS or if you can't see how your symptoms are connected to your life experiences and stressors, then you might want to do more reading on MBS/TMS or see a doctor or psychologist who specializes in this disorder. Often discussing these issues with close friends, relatives or counselors will help to uncover the connections and allow you to see if this syndrome applies to you.