



POTS

Treatment Tips

Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS) is an autonomic nervous system disorder that affects between 1-3 million Americans and 1 out of 100 adolescents. POTS is characterized by an abnormal heart rate increase upon standing, which indicates an unbalanced autonomic nervous system. The autonomic nervous system is responsible for everything our bodies do without us thinking about it—heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature, digestion and more. POTS symptoms vary from person to person and include dizziness, lightheadedness, nausea, fatigue, brain fog, insomnia, gastrointestinal pain, and fainting (or pre-fainting) spells. There are a number of therapies in conventional and alternative medicine that can help POTS patients manage their symptoms or perhaps eliminate them entirely. Check out the list below, and let me know what works for you!

Conventional

Salt & Water Therapy

Increasing fluid and salt intake may help reduce POTS symptoms by expanding blood volume. Patients are often advised to drink at least 2 liters of water and consume 3,000-10,000 mg of salt per day.

Exercise

POTS patients greatly benefit from exercise since it helps recondition the body, enhance muscle tone and promote blood flow. Many patients begin with recumbent exercises (e.g. recumbent bike, rowing machine, swimming) and advance to standing exercises (e.g. running, walking, hiking, biking). Strength training (e.g. squats, leg lifts, weights) can also help increase overall muscle tone and strength.

Sleep

Sleep is essential for helping the body heal and restore. POTS patients should strive to get at least 8 hours of sleep per night, and proper sleep hygiene can help. Avoid screens for an hour before bed and practice active relaxation. Ear plugs and eye masks block out extra stimuli, which can help the nervous system relax.

Compression Gear

Compression stockings and tights can help promote blood flow and minimize blood pooling in the legs, thus potentially reducing symptoms.

Medication

Many medications are used to treat POTS including Fludrocortisone, Midodrine, Ivabradine and beta blockers. POTS patients may also benefit from taking antihistamines (e.g. Zyrtec) since POTS has been linked to excess mast cell activation.

Alternative

Nutrition

Healthy eating is the cornerstone of healthy bodies and minds. POTS patients should focus on eating real, whole foods including pasture-raised meat and eggs, vegetables, fruit and seafood (according to food sensitivities). They should also strive to limit ultra-processed foods, especially refined flour, sugar and seed oils (e.g. canola/soybean oil).

Mind-Body Medicine

- **Brain Retraining:** Many brain retraining programs view POTS as a manifestation of an overreactive stress response in the brain. These programs teach participants how to calm the heightened alarm state and break the pain-fear cycle. Examples include ANS Rewire, Curable App and Lin Health.
- **Therapy:** Unpacking conscious and subconscious stress can help the nervous system relax. Therapists can help clients heal from trauma and learn healthy behaviors like setting boundaries and self-care. Internal Family Systems (IFS) is a powerful form of psychotherapy that helps us learn the different parts of ourselves and heal past wounds.
- **Relaxation Exercises:** Practicing active relaxation helps keep the autonomic nervous system out of fight/flight mode. There are a number of different modalities—from restorative yoga and meditation to mindfulness and Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT). Each person can experiment to find out what works best for them!

Other Holistic Treatments

- Acupuncture
- Reiki
- Visit a Functional/Integrative Medicine Specialist

POTS

Tips & Tricks



- Clenching muscles can help stimulate blood flow and prevent blood pooling in the lower half of the body. Toe lifts can be very beneficial (raise toes with heels planted, return to ground, repeat), as well as tip-toe stands (go on tip-toes, return to ground, repeat). Clenching the buttocks can also be very effective.
- Stand up slowly. If you're lying down, first turn over to your side, then slowly raise to a sitting position, then stand up. Take your time!
- Cross your legs while standing or sitting to prevent blood pooling.
- If fluorescent lights or screens make you dizzy/overstimulated, blue light glasses may help.
- If you want to try yoga, restorative yoga is a great choice for POTS patients. It involves gentle movements and is often done lying down. Check out [Sleepy Santosha](#) on YouTube for POTS-friendly routines.
- Certain treatments might help some symptoms but not all of them—and that's okay. Shifting from ultra-processed foods to real, whole foods can greatly improve gastrointestinal symptoms, but it might not fix sensitivity to stimuli (brain retraining programs or therapy might work for that).
- Be kind to yourself. It's okay to take breaks and rest. This is a journey and while the ultimate goal is complete wellness, accept where you are in the process. Important note: Acceptance does not equal complacency! You can accept exactly where you are and still take steps to heal.
- For more inspiration that healing is possible, check out *Cured* by Dr. Jeffrey Rediger, *When the Body Says No* by Dr. Gabor Maté and *Peace, Love and Healing* by Dr. Bernie Siegel.
- For practical mind-body recovery strategies, check out *Unlearn Your Pain* by Dr. Howard Schubiner and *The Way Out* by Alan Gordon. Alan also has a great podcast called *Tell Me About Your Pain*.

Resources

Dysautonomia International: <http://www.dysautonomiainternational.org/>

Curable App: www.curablehealth.com

Licensed Therapists: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists>

Internal Family Systems (IFS) Therapy: <https://ifs-institute.com/>

Selected Articles:

The Case for Real Food: <https://manya-ronay.medium.com/the-case-for-real-food-63445a6f2cd3>

Healing Mind-Body Pain: <https://medium.com/change-your-mind/healing-mind-body-pain-46512ddc4e45?sk=0bb4efe52cc04d05c63a4fdf09714bc7>