

TMS SECRETS FROM THE THERAPY ROOM



*Top tips to help you
recover from Chronic Pain*



www.chronicpainreliefonlineclinic.com



info@chronicpainreliefonline.clinic



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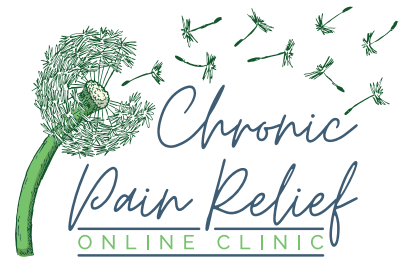
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Carole Randell

MNCPS Acc. PGDip. ILM. ICF



My name is Carole, and I'm passionate about helping you find that peaceful place within. Welcome to gentle healing, grounding and inner transformation, a place within where you can transform stress, anxiety and pain into peace, balance and clarity.

If you are reading this document, then I can assume you are looking for support and help, just as I was in 2007 when I was struggling to cope with the chronic conditions of Fibromyalgia and Chronic Fatigue (more commonly known as M.E. and CFS).



As a mum to four boys, a wife, a carer for my in-laws, and with a demanding job in the NHS, I became just too exhausted to cope anymore. While my mind said *"you have to keep going,"* my body very firmly said *"that is enough!"* Coming to terms with the fact that I wasn't superwoman was a very humbling experience. For someone who was used to supplying answers and juggling everything that life threw at me, the reality of my situation of not being able to cope or work really took my legs from under me. I simply didn't know who I was anymore. Does any of that sound familiar?

I grew up in a very dysfunctional household, often moving with no real safety or security. Growing up that way became the 'norm' and being a sensitive child didn't help. I now know these to be called Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and that these pre-disposed medical outcomes affect us long into our adult lives. Once I understood how this had impacted on me, I trained to become a Psychotherapist and now work with people who are looking for emotional support and recovery. Believe me, if you are willing to put the work in, recovery is possible, as I can testify. Dr Sarno in his book, *'The Mind Body Prescription'* explains all of this brilliantly.

If any of this resonates, as it clearly did with me, then please do get in touch. An Explorer Call with us costs no more than 30 minutes of your time, and it takes nothing to have a chat on the phone to someone who knows and can understand where you are. You probably feel you have exhausted all avenues on trying to get some relief from your chronic pain, but our help just might give you a new lease on life and the pain-free living you have been seeking.

A Warm Welcome



A very warm welcome from both myself Carole Randell, and The Chronic Pain Relief Online Clinic.

I guess much like me, you are on the external search for answers - just as I was in 2007, trying to find answers as to why I was struggling with the chronic conditions of Fibromyalgia and Chronic Fatigue. In this workbook I have tried to encapsulate some of my journey, and share the resources that I found to be most beneficial in my recovery.

I liken the journey to be something like peeling the onion, discovering each layer one at a time, and this lovely graphic by a client of mine sums things up perfectly.

There are many words that have been used to describe the unknown origin of our symptoms, including:

- **Mindbody**
- **TMS**
- **Unexplained medical symptoms**
- **Stress Illness**
- **Psychophysiological**



Recreated with the kind permission of Charlotte Ball

These are just some of the most commonly used descriptors, but the origins of our symptoms can often be described with, and attributed to many different causes. For this workbook, I have chosen to use Mindbody symptoms and TMS.

TMS means Tension Myositis Syndrome, and is a term coined by Dr Sarno in his book, 'The Mindbody Prescription'. In this book, he shares that if you heal the mind, you can heal the pain. The healing starts when we accept that we need to turn inward to find our answers.

Tension Myositis Syndrome is a psychological condition that manifests with physical symptoms, such as chronic back pain, fibromyalgia, and gastrointestinal problems. Our symptoms are not caused by any other medical conditions, and are often unexplainable or misdiagnosed.

We have come a long way since the initial definition of TMS, and now know that

adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), dysfunctional families, and traumas, all contribute to many of us having an increased likelihood of developing medically unexplained symptoms in later life.

Does it go away?

The treatment (for want of a better word), involves developing knowledge and insight. By understanding and applying the concept of TMS, the pain will often resolve. Practitioners who understand and have been trained in the Mindbody approach, know that focusing on bringing the repressed emotions into consciousness is necessary. You can also add reading and group work into the recovery process, to help support becoming conscious of what has contributed to your symptoms.

My hope for this workbook is that it starts you off on your recovery journey, and gives you some insight and support into how you can resolve your own symptoms.

Without further ado, turn the page and start your exploration into how Mindbody Symptoms and TMS develop. Remember to have a pen ready to write down your thoughts and reflections, and if anything comes up for you that triggers an emotion, sensation, feeling, anxiety or symptom, please don't hesitate to reach out to the TMS/Mindbody community, we are here to support you, and we are all on this journey together.

Carole x



How Mindbody symptoms (TMS) develop



How Mind Body Symptoms (TMS) Develop

At the heart of the development of TMS lies our desire to be good people, loved by those we care about. This desire leads us to strive for perfection, and to put the needs of others above our own. We will cook a three-course family meal after working a 10-hour day, because that is what a good mother would do. We will be the first person to volunteer to work on the weekend, because that is what a good employee would do. We will stay up all night making sure our homework is perfect, because if we don't, we won't get a good job. Our beliefs of what a good and perfect person will do directly influence our behavior on a day-to-day basis.

But sometimes, as more and more external stress is added and our desire for perfection increases, we develop a very deep-seated resentment toward these tasks.

There are some nights when you come home from working a double shift and are angry that you have to cook a meal for your family, while your husband has been watching TV all night. Part of us hates telling our friends that we can't go out on Friday night, because we have to read and study for a class the next day. When our toddler wakes us up at 3am for the fourth night in a row, some part of us has rage at the child, for waking us up yet again.



Photo by SEO Galaxy on Unsplash

These are all normal feelings and emotions to have.

However, when a person has an emotion that goes against their belief of what a good and perfect person would do, the only option available to them is to repress that emotion. If we admit that we are angry at our family, our boss, or at doing homework, we fear that we would be considered a bad person and will be rejected by those we love or who we want to respect us. If we are not

perfect, we will be unworthy of being loved. So instead of admitting that we are angry at our spouse for never cleaning up or doing the dishes, we repress it deep in our unconscious.

Another repressed emotion might be guilt. Some of us have to care for a loved one who is injured or aging. Being a care giver is not an easy task. If we aren't able to provide the necessary care, or the care the person not only desires but may demand of us, we may feel guilt. If we repress that feeling, especially if we are the type of person who wants to please very much, it can cause us TMS pain. As we continue to repress these emotions, we create an immense amount of emotional tension which only increases as more and more stress is added to our lives.

In order to keep you from recognizing that you have these powerful emotions of anger, rage or guilt, your unconscious creates physical symptoms, such as:

- ***Back Pain***
- ***Neck Pain***
- ***Plantar Fasciitis***
- ***Acid Reflux***
- ***Anxiety***
- ***Depression***
- ***Dizziness***
- ***Irritable Bowel Syndrome***

These, along with any of the 1001 other symptoms that happen on a daily basis, may their own seem reasonably innocuous. But, when you string them together - *they become something much deeper.*



Photo by Road Trip with Raj on Unsplash

These symptoms serve as a way to distract you from the unwanted emotions by having you focus on your back hurting instead of your anger, rage, or guilt. We develop TMS because we are unable to accept and/or process these emotions.

Do you recognise or experience any of these emotions or symptoms? Take a moment to write down your own experiences:

Lined area for writing responses.



How do we get better?



Accept the diagnosis

Once you have checked with a doctor that your symptoms aren't caused by anything more serious, you must accept that they are rooted in TMS pain. First and foremost, recovering from TMS requires that you take an active role in your treatment. Since your symptoms are caused by repressed emotions, a doctor cannot give you a prescription to heal you, healing must come from within. The first and most important step you need to take, is to accept that you have TMS and that your symptoms are non-threatening.

There is nothing structurally wrong with you.

You do not have a bad back. Typing on the computer keyboard is not the cause of your RSI. Running does not cause your shin splints. Sitting for short or long periods or walking even just in the house does not cause your back pain. Your back does not hurt because you are sixty or eighty or older. There are now many studies that show that just because something shows on an MRI scan, it doesn't necessarily constitute anything serious. We can go for years with meniscus tears, but it doesn't necessarily impair our ability to live our lives.

When you have TMS, this means that all of your symptoms are caused by repressed emotions and not structural or external factors. Once you truly accept the diagnosis, you will no longer fear your symptoms, no longer worry about them, and notice that they begin to fade away. It is not good enough to believe your pain is caused by TMS repressed emotions. You must believe in it 100 percent and tell that to your unconscious mind, so it gets the message and stops the pain.

Education is the key to accepting the diagnosis. Read a TMS book to gain an understanding of the MindBody connection, and the true cause of your symptoms.

Resume physical activity

Once your symptoms begin to reduce and your confidence builds up, begin to engage in physical activity. Exercise and physical activity will reinforce the message that your symptoms are non threatening. It may take some time for the message to sink into your unconscious. Exercising will help this along. It will also increase your confidence and help you find more joy in your life. Both will reduce the emotional tension you have built up.

Discounting the physical

Assuming that you saw a competent physician, any serious medical conditions have been ruled out.

Since you do not have a physical problem, do not engage in activities that seek to treat your symptoms from a physical perspective. This includes:

- ***Acupuncture***
- ***Chiropractic manipulation***
- ***Massage***
- ***Use of ergonomic devices***
- ***Back braces***
- ***Shoe inserts.***

If you are on pain medications, you may want to begin to think about gradually getting off of them. Speak to your GP to enable you to do this.

Recovering requires that you stop all physical treatments and begin to address your condition from a psychological perspective. Don't quit using medication or painkillers 'cold turkey,' ask your doctor how to reduce or stop using medications, so as to avoid withdrawal problems.

Read a TMS book

Dr. Sarno said that *"Information is the penicillin to this disorder."* The more knowledge you gain about the TMS process and the true cause of your symptoms, the more confidence you will have in this approach and in yourself.

Read and re-read one of Dr. Sarno's books or another TMS book and learn more about this condition. I have chosen Dr. Sarno as he is the original father of this concept, there are of course other professionals within the field. For a list of TMS books check out the bibliography at the back of this document – these are all books that I have read and found helpful.

Use Affirmations

Many people have reported how helpful affirmations are in recovering. This essentially involves talking to your brain. While it may feel slightly odd to talk to yourself, people have reported that it allows them to gain control over their thoughts and take a more active role in their recovery.



Photo by Laura Kapfer on Unsplash

Here are some suggested affirmations for you:

- **I am comfortable in my body. My back is strong and healthy. I am able to do anything I want.**
- **Taking care of myself physically is important to me. I like keeping myself fit and feeling good.**
- **I have a control of my emotions. I am proud of myself**
- **I enjoy life and fully live it. There is nothing that keeps me from fully living my life.**
- **My back has no structural damage. It is strong and healthy**
- **I give myself permission to relax, feel good, and be active. I enjoy feeling healthy.**
- **People enjoy being around me. I have self-confidence and self-respect. I like myself and it shows.**

Daily reminders for you to review:

- **The pain is due to TMS, not to structural abnormalities**
- **TMS is a harmless condition, caused by my repressed emotions**
- **The principal emotion is my repressed anger**
- **TMS exists only to distract my attention from the emotions**
- **Since my back is basically normal, there is nothing to fear**
- **Therefore physical activity is not dangerous**
- **I must resume all physical activity**
- **I will not be concerned or intimidated by the pain**
- **I will shift my attention from the pain to emotional issues**
- **I intend to be in control - not my subconscious mind**
- **I must always think psychological, not physical.**

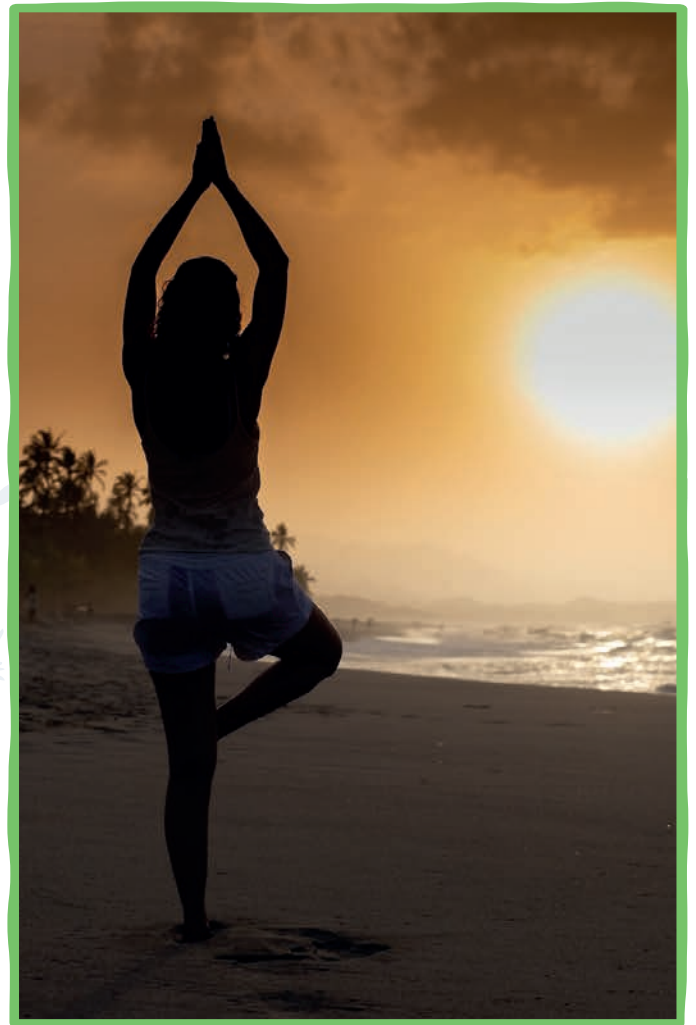


Photo by Olimpo Salazar on Unsplash

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal green ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Self Induced Pressures

Recognising and addressing the pressures you put on yourself, and the impact they have upon you is an important part of your recovery. Please underline or tick any of the following that you feel relate to you, and then complete the 2nd and 3rd column for each relevant trait.

Personality Trait	What do you believe caused you to develop this trait?	How does it cause you pressure?
Low self-esteem		
Low confidence		
Lack of self belief		
Perfectionist		
High expectations of yourself		
Need to be good and/or liked		
Conscientious		



Self critical		
Analytical		
Overly responsible		
Resentful		
Reliable		
Competitive		
Driven		
Non confrontational		
Like to be in control		
Strong drive to be helpful		

TMS personality traits



There are a multitude of books that outline the different personality traits that are common among TMS patients. In recovering from TMS, it is important to recognize how one's personality traits repress emotions and trigger TMS symptoms.

These traits fall into the following categories:

- **Perfectionism**
- **Goodism/People Pleasing**
- **Legalist**
- **Stoic**
- **Anxiety and Fear**
- **Low Self-Esteem**
- **Hostility and Aggression**
- **Dependency**

Perfectionism

Those with TMS pain or other symptoms such as anxiety, have a strong desire to have everything they do be perfect. They must succeed at every activity, whether it's their career, associations with their family, or even performing their hobbies.

To their credit, perfectionists are extremely organized and detail oriented. However, they also tend to put too much on their plate at once and try to accomplish too many things. By seeking to be the perfect person, they ignore their own needs and repress their feelings. (Source: *Pain Free for Life*, by Scott Brady. Pgs. 104-105)

Are you a perfectionist?

- ***When you work on a project, does everything have to be perfect?***
- ***Do you have a clear picture of how you want everything to be?***
- ***Do you always have some sort of task that needs to be done?***
- ***Do you ignore your own needs and feelings to accomplish a task?***
- ***Do you think that there is only one right way to do something?***
- ***Do you put 110% of yourself into everything you do?***

Goodism/People Pleasing

Goodists are people who put the needs and desires of others before their own. They have a strong need for other people to like them. They adhere to what the

social, cultural, and religious norms suggest is a good parent, spouse, child, employee, or friend. Goodists will routinely change their plans to help others.

Although they are well-liked and do good in their communities, they fail to address their own needs, repressing their emotions, desires, and feelings. Behind these good deeds are deep-seated feelings of inadequacy and low self-worth. The continual actions of goodists of putting others before their own needs infuriates the unconscious mind, causing it to act out by creating TMS symptoms. (Source: *Mind Body Prescription*, by John Sarno. Pg 23)

Are you a goodist?

- ***Do you routinely change your plans in order to satisfy the schedule or needs of others?***
- ***When a social group or religious organization holds an event, do you feel the need to volunteer to help organize and work at the event?***
- ***If people you know, such as friends, colleagues, family members, have a disagreement or argument, do you tend to attempt to play peacemaker?***
- ***When someone says something that you strongly disagree with, do you speak your mind, or do you keep your thoughts to yourself?***
- ***If a group of people are planning an event, do you say what you want to do, or do you just go along with what others want?***

Legalist

People who possess the legalist trait can best be described as people who think that their views are right, and that other views are incorrect. They strongly hold on to their viewpoints and tend to dislike people who disagree with them.

Unlike perfectionists who seek to do the right thing, legalists seek to be right. Responsibility and upholding their commitments are common among legalists. Because of this, it takes a long time for legalists to make promises or enter agreements. Legalists also hold themselves to extremely high standards that can breed feelings of unworthiness and self-hatred. (Source: *Pain Free for Life*, pgs. 110-113).

Are you a legalist?

- ***Do you think that your views and opinions are always right?***
- ***Do you think that the world would be a better place if everyone shared your views?***
- ***Does it take you a long time to make a decision?***
- ***When making plans or decisions, do you worry that you might make the wrong choice?***
- ***Do you like being around people who have different views from yours? Or do you dislike socialising with those with views opposite to yours?***

Stoic

The stoic personality trait consists of people who hold in their emotions. They have difficulty opening up to people and expressing their emotions. The idea of speaking about one's emotions and feelings seems awkward to these people. They rarely show anger, sadness, love, and sorrow.

They hold in their emotions as a way to be in control of their life. People with the stoic trait repress or ignore their emotions. As a result, their unconscious mind creates TMS symptoms, so they do not have to recognize that they are angry, sad, or even joyful. (Source: *Pain Free for Life*, 114-116).

Do you have a stoic personality?

- **Do you find it awkward or difficult to express your emotions?**
- **Would you say that you may get a little angry or a little frustrated, but rarely have extreme emotions?**
- **Does being in control of your emotions make you feel like you are in control of your life?**
- **If people saw you express your emotions, do you think they would think of you negatively?**
- **Are you embarrassed to cry in front of your friends and family?**

Anxiety and Fear

People with anxious or fearful personality traits focus on worst-case scenarios. They constantly worry that something bad or terrible will happen, be it the death of a family member or a natural disaster whenever there is a small storm.

People with this trait are also afraid that people will eventually do something to hurt them. This leads to shyness around new people. They may even feel like they are being rejected in places when it is not actually happening. When they have a medical problem, no matter how minor, anxious people focus on the worst possible diagnosis. Even minor medical problems such as a cut finger are worried into becoming a possible life-threatening catastrophe. (Source: *Pain Free for Life*, 118)

Do you have the anxiety/fear personality?

- **When there is a small thunderstorm do you assume that it will grow into a tornado?**
- **When your family members go somewhere, do you worry that something terrible might happen to them?**
- **Are you nervous about meeting new people?**
- **Do you think that if you are honest with people, they will reject you?**
- **When you go to the doctor, do you worry that you will be diagnosed with a serious medical condition?**

Low Self-Esteem

At some point in everyone's life they have some feelings of inadequacy. However, there are also people whose feelings of inadequacy produce long term low self-esteem. People with this trait rarely feel like they can achieve even simple tasks.

Low self-esteem makes people feel inferior to others and leads to the repression of feelings. People with low self-esteem tend to hold in their thoughts and feelings because they think that they are not worthy of being heard. By holding in their thoughts and feelings, those with low self-esteem may develop TMS symptoms because of the unconscious rage that is built up inside of them.

(Source: *Mind Body Prescription*, pg. 22)

Do you have a Low Self-Esteem personality?

- **Do you feel that other people are most often better at things than you?**
- **Do you think that people do not like you as much as other people?**
- **Do you feel anxious meeting new people or being in a crowded room?**
- **Do you question your ability to do things?**
- **Do you feel like you do not warrant praise or accolades?**

You can take this free test to help you find out if you have low self esteem:

www.psycom.net/low-self-esteem-self-assessment-test

Hostility and Aggression

In some cases, anger and aggression is fine - however people with this trait tend to express extreme anger and agitation in situations that do not warrant extreme action. They overact to an event and can be categorized as easily agitated, hot-headed, or even highly-strung.

The event or issue that the person is reacting to is rarely the issue or event that they are actually angry about. Instead of dealing with the more serious issue behind their anger, they place their frustration onto something less severe, and probably less difficult to talk about. There are usually deep issues that these people avoid discussing and so they repress their true feelings. TMS symptoms may develop because of this repression. (Source: *Mind Body Prescription*, pg. 24)

Do you have the hostility/aggression trait?

- **Have you found that little events can make you react in an extreme way?**
- **Do you routinely get 'road rage' or very angry/frustrated when driving?**
- **Do you have a short tolerance for people who make mistakes?**
- **When involved in a conflict, do you think the problem is always someone else's fault?**

- ***Do you have difficulty seeing events/arguments from someone else's point of view?***

Dependency

Having the desire to be taken care of is a normal characteristic. However Western culture teaches us that this is wrong, so people repress this desire. When people are dependent on others there is a tendency to be angry or frustrated with the person they are depending on.

People with this trait have the tendency to choose careers that have security yet lack any sense of challenge or reward. By repressing the need to depend on someone the unconscious mind becomes infuriated and creates TMS symptoms. (Source: *Mind Body Prescription*, pg. 25)

Do you have the dependency trait?

- ***When making plans do you prefer if other people take the lead?***
- ***Do you avoid challenging or risky jobs and tasks?***
- ***Do you tend to gravitate towards relationships where the other person takes care of you?***
- ***Do you like it when other people make decisions for you?***
- ***Do you find being alone or isolated frustrating and undesirable?***

If like me, you have ended up having more questions after reading about TMS, then please do book a FREE 30 minute Explorer Call in which you can talk to one of our accredited practitioners here at the online clinic by scanning this QR Code, or visiting:



www.chronicpainreliefonlineclinic.com/booking-calendar/explorer-call

Information referenced from:

[www.tmswiki.org/ppd/An_Introduction_to_Tension_Myositis_Syndrome_\(TMS\)](http://www.tmswiki.org/ppd/An_Introduction_to_Tension_Myositis_Syndrome_(TMS))

Bibliography



The following books provide a wealth of extra knowledge and information on TMS and symptoms, and I have personally found them all very helpful in my recovery journey:

Chronic Pain: Your Key to Recovery *Georgie Oldfield, MCSP, 2014.*

This self-empowering book explains research findings, describes dozens of case studies and provides practical tools to help you identify the cause of your pain and puts you on the path that leads to relief once and for all.

The Great Pain Deception *Steven Ray Ozanich, 2012.*

In this book, Steven Ozanich describes his 27 year battle with chronic pain and describes how he used the TMS approach to become pain free.

Healing Trauma *Peter A. Levine, 1999.*

This is Levine's treatment program for how to overcome traumatic experiences. It consists of helpful tips and assignments that will allow a person to release energy to recover from past traumatic events.

They Can't Find Anything Wrong *Dave Clarke, MD, 2007.*

Dr. Clarke writes about his experience treating patients with what he calls "Stress Illness". He has found that by interviewing his patients and helping them to identify the major stresses in their life, they are able to resolve previously, chronic health issues.

Unlearn Your Pain *Howard Schubiner, MD, 2010.*

This book outlines Dr. Schubiner's program that reverses chronic pain by understanding that pain is caused by nerve sensitization and learned nerve pathways, instead of actual tissue damage. The book contains writing exercises, a CD with four meditations, and a variety of other materials that help people unlearn their pain.

Waking the Tiger *Peter Levine, 1997.*

This book asks and answers an intriguing question: why are animals in the wild, though threatened routinely, rarely traumatized? By understanding the dynamics that make wild animals virtually immune to traumatic symptoms, the mystery of human trauma is revealed.

Mind over Back Pain *John Sarno, MD, 1982.*

In this book, Dr. Sarno outlines the theory of TMS (Tension Myositis Syndrome) and describes his experience treating patients successfully.

Healing Back Pain: The Mind-Body Connection *John Sarno, MD, 1991.*

In his second book, Dr. Sarno explains his theory of TMS, and describes the treatment approach that has been effective with his patients. This book is a good one to start with since it is easier to read and understand for some. He expands on his previous book and lays out a treatment program that has helped thousands of readers recover from years of pain.

The Mindbody Prescription: Healing the Body, Healing the Pain *John Sarno, MD, 1998.*

Dr. Sarno adds information that has come to light during his clinical practice. This book is detailed about the psychology thought to cause the chronic pain syndromes and describes the many other chronic health issues that can occur for the same reason. The treatment program is added to as well.

The Divided Mind: The Epidemic of Mindbody Disorders *John Sarno, MD, 2006.*

In one of his last books, Dr. Sarno continues to add some information to the theory he developed more than 30 years ago. He credits his patients for continuing to teach him how and why these pain syndromes develop as well as the most effective ways to resolve them. This book has some interesting case studies and chapters written by other TMS physicians in various specialties, which add a valuable perspective.

