

Lyrica vs Cymbalta — Printable Nerve Pain Cheatsheet

Pregabalin vs duloxetine compared for nerve pain, fibromyalgia, and diabetic neuropathy: onset, dosing, weight effect, and dependence.

Side-by-Side Comparison

Feature	Lyrica (pregabalin)	Cymbalta (duloxetine)
Drug Class	Anticonvulsant (GABA analog)	SNRI antidepressant
FDA Approved For	Nerve pain, fibromyalgia, seizures	Depression, anxiety, fibromyalgia, neuropathy
Onset of Pain Relief	1–2 weeks	2–4 weeks
Dosing Frequency	2–3x daily	Once daily
DEA Schedule	Schedule V	Not controlled
Weight Effect	Weight gain common	Weight-neutral or slight loss
Withdrawal Risk	Yes — taper required	Yes — taper required

Strengths at a Glance

Lyrica (pregabalin)

- Faster pain relief
- Also approved for seizures
- Helps with anxiety
- Predictable dose-response

Cymbalta (duloxetine)

- Once-daily dosing
- Also treats depression and anxiety
- Weight-neutral
- Not a controlled substance

Typical Dosing

Lyrica (pregabalin)

- Starting: 75mg twice daily
- Maintenance: 150–300mg/day divided
- Max: 600mg/day
- Renal dose adjustment required

Cymbalta (duloxetine)

- Starting: 30mg once daily
- Maintenance: 60mg once daily
- Max: 120mg/day for pain
- Take with food to reduce nausea

Bottom Line

Lyrica typically provides faster pain relief and helps anxiety, but causes weight gain and is a Schedule V controlled substance. Cymbalta treats depression and pain together, is weight-neutral and non-controlled — but takes 2–4 weeks to work and often causes early nausea until the body adjusts.

Which Should You Choose?

Choose Lyrica (pregabalin) if

- You need faster pain relief
- You also have a seizure disorder
- You have generalized anxiety with pain
- Cymbalta caused nausea you couldn't tolerate

Choose Cymbalta (duloxetine) if

- You also have depression
- Weight gain is a concern
- You want once-daily dosing
- You prefer a non-controlled medication

Educational reference only — not medical advice. Always follow your prescriber's directions. Full guide:
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