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The purpose of this presentation is to elucidate the various responses women have to being, or not being, categorized as disabled within specific spheres (e.g. medical, state) or places (e.g. doctor's office, work) after the onset of chronic illness. Drawing on interviews conducted with 55 women living with fibromyalgia syndrome in Ontario, Canada, I examine how these women come to understand various constructions of disability and whether or not they reflect their sense of self, and how and why they either embrace or reject external categorizations of themselves as disabled by the state or medical professionals. In doing so I contribute to the limited geographic literature which stresses the importance of spatiality and ways of being in place to ill and impaired persons' negotiations of the embodied self and relationships with others. It is found that negotiating disability was, for many, an emotionally charged and complex process, drawing on one or more strategies: reluctantly employing some meanings associated with 'being disabled' to achieve material ends, creating one's own understanding of disability that is most in keeping with one's sense of self, embracing other meanings to the extent that they offered a legitimate basis for identity, and/or rejecting disability in the interests of sustaining an existing identity. For those women in need of forms of state assistance such as income support, health care and state institutions exert powerful pressures to come to terms with what disability means in one's life – particularly as medical and state authorities classify people as 'disabled enough' or 'not disabled enough' for entitlement to state resources.