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## 5 Almost-Instant Fixes For Pain Relief

Ease aches naturally with these quick and easy tricks

Holly Cassandra Corbett, Prevention

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There are many reasons you experience pain, from joint inflammation tied to arthritis to overdoing it in the garden to body-wide tightening of muscles linked to a common disorder known as fibromyalgia. No matter the cause, when you're aching, all you want is for the hurt to stop. Check out these five tips for almost-instant relief from Jacob Teitelbaum, MD, author of the new book *Real Cause, Real Cure* (Rodale).

## The Oddest Pain Relief Tricks That Work

## 1. DIY acupressure.

Muscle pain is the most common type of pain, says Dr. Teitelbaum. Tender, marble-size knots in your muscles are called trigger points, and many trigger points correspond to acupressure points used in treatments such as acupuncture or sports massage. "Push on the trigger point with enough pressure to see a white mark from your finger and hold for at least 45 seconds," advises Dr. Teitelbaum. "It will hurt at first, but doing this increases the energy flow to help release the muscle the same way a sports massage works to ease the pain." If you have pain in a hard-to-reach spot—such as your back, shoulder, or neck—apply pressure with a tennis ball. Simply lay on the floor (you may also lie on your bed but you'll be able to apply more pressure if you lay on a hard surface), place the ball near the area where there's pain, and roll it around until you find the most tender spot. Lie there for 1 to 5 minutes, or until you feel your muscles relax.

## 2. Let the music play.

Listening to music helps improve pain relief in people with chronic back pain, finds a French study. Another study discovered that nearly half of the cancer patients who listened to music for 30 minutes reaped a 50% reduction in pain.

according to *The International Journal of Nursing Studies*. "Plugging into your iPod helps lessen pain's intensity because you're distracting yourself with something pleasurable rather than focusing on your aches," says Dr. Teitelbaum.

## Nature's New Pain Relievers

## 3. Take a soak.

"A magnesium deficiency causes muscles to contract, which is a major pain trigger," says Dr. Teitelbaum. "The American diet has nearly 65% less magnesium than it did decades earlier because we eat more processed foods." Foods high in magnesium include bananas, avocados, peanuts, whole grains, and soy. The mineral can also be absorbed through the skin, and Epsom salts are made up of magnesium sulfate. Ease muscle pain by adding 2 cups of Epsom salts to a bath and soak for at least 12 minutes a few times a week.

## 4. Rub on relief.

Topical gels can bring relief by helping to numb nerve endings and increase blood flow to the area for faster healing, says Dr. Teitelbaum. He recommends applying Tiger Balm to treat everything from arthritis to headaches to bruises. The active ingredients are menthol and camphor, and the cooling herbs help block sensors on the pain fibers to instantly soothe aches.

## More Ways to Relieve Pain Naturally

## 5. Get a move on.

"Exercise—including yoga, tai chi, and walking—has been shown over and over again to reduce pain," says Dr. Teitelbaum. In fact, a study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that fibromyalgia patients who participated in a twice-weekly hour-long tai chi classes (a combination of slow movements, breathing, and meditation) for 12 weeks reported significant pain improvement. "Factors such as stress trigger adrenaline, which signals your body to tighten up and results in pain. Yoga and tai chi practices help stretch and relax your muscles and soothe soreness." Even just 10 to 15 seconds of stretching can help. Start by stretching wherever you feel pain (such as a seated forward bend for lower-back problems), hold for 10 seconds or until you feel the muscle release, and gradually work up to 1 minute.

Provided by Prevention

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