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HEAL ACHING JOINTS • FIBER & WEIGHT LOSS • MEAT-FREE RECIPES

joint pain relief

natural solutions to
get moving again

Creak, pop! One in five American adults experiences painful joints (mostly due to osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis), and when sore joints from sports injuries, overuse, and strain associated with being overweight get added in, that's a whole lot of achiness nationwide.

Joints are complicated structures that “rely on bone, muscle, and ligaments all working together to provide a full range of motion,” says Holly Lucille, a Los Angeles-based naturopath. Understanding the source of your joint pain or inflammation is important, she adds, in order to pinpoint the most effective remedy. It could be an autoimmune disease such as rheumatoid arthritis, but in other cases, food sensitivities can be the culprit.

Natural remedies offer a powerful and safe way to ease symptoms and promote joint healing. “Multiple studies demonstrate that natural remedies can be more effective than their pharmaceutical counterparts,” says Jacob Teitelbaum, MD, author of *From Fatigued to Fantastic!*

The exciting part of giving a natural remedy a go, he adds, is that, unlike conventional medications that come with side effects, herbal healers tend to give “side benefits.” For example, while you might try an herb like turmeric for a swollen knee, while taking this multipurpose herb, you could end up also soothing your heartburn. >>>

MEET FOUR MAJOR PAIN RELIEVERS



1. Turmeric

The Indian spice turmeric contains an active ingredient called

curcumin that reduces inflammation in a variety of ways, including the down-regulation of COX-2 enzymes; suppressing COX-2 enzymes is also the way NSAIDs like aspirin and ibuprofen work. When inflammation quiets down, joints feel less painful and stiffness fades away.

Dr. Teitelbaum likes combining curcumin with the herb boswellia. "This combination was shown in a head-on study to be more effective than the commonly prescribed drug Celebrex," he says. Although it is fine to try these herbs while also taking a prescription arthritis or pain medication, if you go that route, Dr. Teitelbaum suggests using both the herb and medication for six weeks to

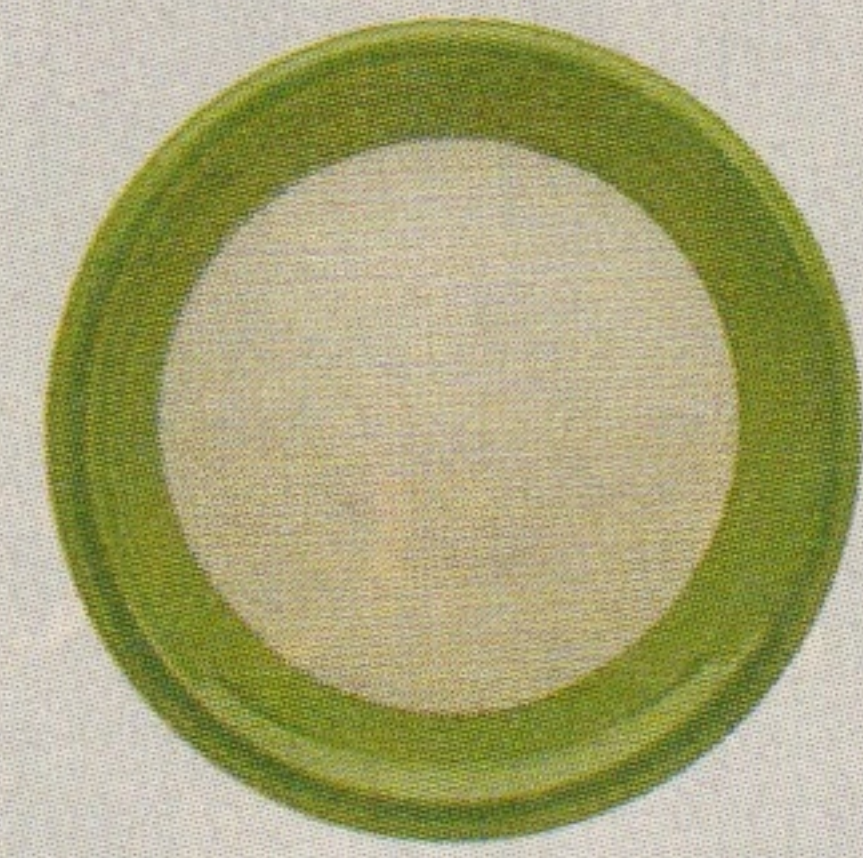
reach the full effect of the herb. Then try tapering off the conventional pain medication to see if the herb alone can do the trick. Skip turmeric if you have gallstones.



2. Comfrey

Studies confirm that comfrey cream outperforms conventional

medications when it comes to ankle sprains and brings the added benefit of stimulating tissue repair. "Comfrey cream excels when it comes to all sorts of joint pain, but especially any pain traced back to osteoarthritis," says Dr. Lucille. She recommends trying it alone or combined with other herbs. "Many of my patients get even better results when they pair comfrey cream with an oral curcumin supplement. I consider this my one-two punch for joint pain."



3. Collagen

Collagen is a protein found throughout your body, especially in your connective

tissue. Collagen supplements, in a form called collagen hydrolysate, can improve symptoms for those with osteoarthritis and other joint problems. In one study, 80 people with aching knees or hips due to osteoarthritis took either 2 grams of collagen or a placebo every day for 70 days. By the end of the study, those taking the collagen reported less pain and were able to do more physical activities.

4. Andrographis

Andrographis has a long history of use in both Ayurvedic and traditional Chinese medicine. It's better known as an immune-booster, but it is gaining recognition for

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inflammatory powers and potential healing of rheumatoid arthritis. People with rheumatoid arthritis who supplemented with andrographis in a recent study experienced fewer tender or swollen joints. A key way that andrographis serves as an anti-inflammatory is by reducing the expression of several pro-inflammatory proteins. Consult your healthcare practitioner before adding supplements to your regimen. **1111**



bonus benefits

With conventional joint pain medications, you open yourself up to the potential for harmful side effects. It's a different story with natural remedies, which can improve health in multiple ways, giving you "side benefits." For example:

natural healer	side benefits
Andrographis	Immune booster, treats the common cold, eases symptoms of ulcerative colitis
Collagen	Smooths wrinkles as a beauty aid
Comfrey (topical)	Wound healing, bruise healing, improves gout
Turmeric	Cancer risk reduction, decreased depression, treats heartburn/indigestion



Victoria Dolby Toews, MPH, has been a health journalist for more than two decades; her latest book is *Life After Baby: Rediscovering and Reclaiming Your Healthy Pizzazz* (Basic Health Publications, 2012).

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