

arthritis away

Don't let arthritis cramp your style. Naturopath **Caroline Robertson** investigates some reliable remedies that will help you throw off your pain shackles and start dancing again.

Osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis are debilitating diseases causing swelling, pain and damage to joints. Arthritis afflicts one in five Australians with osteoarthritis accounting for 63 per cent of hospital inpatient expenditure. Osteoarthritis occurs due to wear, deficiencies, genetics, injury and obesity. Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disease with an uncertain cause though

it can be triggered by hormones, viruses and allergens.

Natural approaches to improve arthritis include exercise, physiotherapy, massage, nutrition, herbs, supplements and meditation. These work together to ease stress, inflammation and instability while increasing strength, immunity and mobility.

Diet to get going

Diet is important for joint health – avoid sugar, refined carbohydrates, trans fatty acids, grains, red meat and acidic foods, all of which can increase inflammation. Boost your omega-3 rich fish intake. According to a Swedish study of 32,000-plus women, if you eat fish (such as wild salmon and rainbow trout) once a week you are less likely to develop rheumatoid arthritis. If you're overweight reduce fatty foods until you reach your goal weight to reduce joint strain. Keep your body alkaline, with a daily green smoothie of

alfalfa sprouts, spirulina, broccoli, kale, kelp and chlorella. Though check with your healthcare professional if you have hyperthyroidism before boosting your greens.

Move to improve

Staying supple and strong with flowing circulation is vital to reduce arthritic pain. Prioritise daily low-impact aerobic activity like fast walking, water aerobics or mini tramping. Add stretches for flexibility plus strength training for muscle tone and joint stability. Watch your posture and move into a different position at least every thirty minutes. Ease aches with massage, mineral salt baths and guided meditation.

Plant pain killers

Boswellia serrata is a frankincense resin prized in Ayurveda for its powerful pain relieving properties. Latest studies confirm it's a strong anti-inflammatory

due to the boswellic acid it contains. Researchers concluded that "Boswellia reduces pain rapidly, as soon as one week after starting treatment and reduces levels of the cartilage-degrading enzyme MMP-3 in synovial fluid." In two conclusive clinical trials, boswellia increased mobility and flexibility in osteoarthritis patients. Pregnant women are advised to avoid boswellia.

Turmeric is an important Indian spice which does more than add colour to your curry. It is a powerful tonic that prevents and eases pain and degeneration. Turmeric's active agent is curcumin, an antioxidant with anti-inflammatory actions. Free from side effects, turmeric is incredibly effective at soothing joint swelling and pain. Clinically, curcumin is as effective as cortisone for rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis and post-operative inflammation, without the side effects. A 2012 study of rheumatoid arthritis patients showed curcumin was more effective than the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug diclofenac at reducing pain.

Rose hip comes from the lovely dog rose seeds common in Scandinavia, it has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. It has been clinically trialed and shown to improve movement and reduce pain in osteoarthritis sufferers. Dr Marc Cohen, health sciences professor at Melbourne's RMIT University, says that rose hip powder works without the dangerous blood thinning side effects that some NSAIDs have. He says, "I have arthritis, but I'm not bothered by pain because I make myself a smoothie every morning with a tablespoon of rose hip powder."

He recommends two grams a day for a month, then reducing to one gram a day permanently.

Soothing supplements

Glucosamine sulfate works to create cartilage to cushion joints. In a recent study osteoarthritic aches decreased by up to 60 per cent in those who took 1,500mg of glucosamine sulfate with 200mg of omega-3. Researcher Joerg Gruenwald says, "Omega-3 fatty acids inhibit the inflammation process in osteoarthritis, whereas glucosamine sulfate further supports the rebuilding of lost cartilage substance." Glucosamine should not be taken with warfarin and should be avoided in those allergic to shellfish.

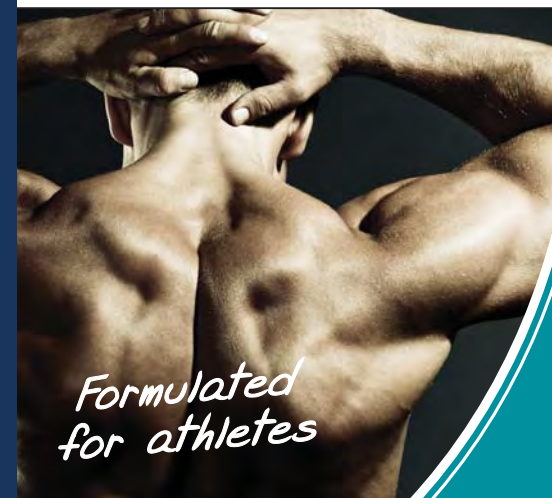
MSM is often given with glucosamine because it enhances its effect. This organic sulphur found in foods is a building block for strong bones, joints, teeth and nails. It also boosts the immune system and has anti-inflammatory effects. This was confirmed in a double-blind study over six weeks where those taking 2,250mg of MSM daily reported an average 82 per cent improvement in their joint pain. Be aware that MSM is a blood thinner and can increase requirements of the mineral molybdenum.

Krill oil comes from tiny crustacean that live in icy Antarctic waters. It contains anti-inflammatory omega-3 fatty acids DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) and EPA

(eicosapentaenoic acid) and has been shown to significantly decrease joint tenderness and stiffness in rheumatoid or osteoarthritis sufferers. The advantage of krill oil over fish oil is that the omega-3s in krill are in a different form which is easier for the body to absorb, meaning less krill oil capsules need to be taken to get the same health effects as fish oil. Krill oil also has the added bonus of containing choline as well as an antioxidant – in fact it has 47 per cent more antioxidants than standard fish oil. Krill is said to be a cleaner product as it is sourced from pristine waters and undergoes extensive processes to ensure quality and eco-sustainability.

Green lipped mussel (GLM) is treasured by Maoris for its magical joint healing power. This tasty mussel contains eicosatetraenoic acid (ETA) which is a potent anti-inflammatory. Research reveals it alleviates the symptoms of osteoarthritis and improves joint function and mobility. Unlike standard NSAIDs such as aspirin, it is gentle on the stomach. Interestingly, GLM has also successfully treated dogs with osteoarthritis. 🐾

Naturopath Caroline Robertson has practised and taught natural therapies for the past 25 years. For consultations, health retreats and guided meditations contact www.carolinerobertson.com.au



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