



How can I relieve my osteoarthritis pain?

Stay nimble naturally with three experts' advice.

A dietitian says: Osteoarthritis, or "wear and tear" arthritis (when the breakdown of cartilage causes the bones to rub together), is an inflammatory disease, so eating foods known to quiet inflammation—and skipping foods that cause it—can help.

Treatment: A Mediterranean diet (high in vegetables and fruits, with a moderate amount of whole grains, nuts, seeds and fish) may reduce inflammation. Overall, you want to avoid processed foods and make sure you get more omega-3s (healthy fats found in oily fish and flaxseed) than omega-6s (pro-inflammatory fats found in animal products). Eat one or two servings a day of antioxidant-packed kale and spinach, and drink 2 ounces of tart cherry juice a day to help ease osteoarthritis symptoms.

—Sheila Dean, D.Sc., R.D., medical nutritionist in private practice and adjunct nutrition science professor at the University of Tampa in Florida

A physician says: Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs might help control your symptoms, but you're still losing cartilage. Supplements can help restore that cartilage, ease pain and curb the inflammation associated with osteoarthritis.

Treatment: Natural substances found in healthy cartilage, glucosamine (take 1,500 to 3,000 milligrams a day) and chondroitin sulfate (take 800 to 1,200 milligrams a day), have the strongest scientific evidence of effectiveness in treating osteoarthritis. Another solid choice is taking avocado-soybean unsaponifiables (take 300 milligrams a day). Also, make sure to get 2,000 IU of vitamin D daily, as studies indicate that low vitamin D levels have been associated with the development of osteoarthritis.

—Jason Theodosakis, M.D., author of *The Arthritis Cure* and associate professor at the University of Arizona College of Medicine in Tucson

A yoga therapist says: Physical activity will strengthen the muscles that support the affected joints. Regular exercise also keeps up your mobility and helps prevent weight gain (known to exacerbate osteoarthritis).

Treatment: Do some exercise that's easy on your joints, such as swimming, walking or yoga. If you're interested in yoga and have your doctor's OK, call a few studios and ask them to suggest classes that are gentle and appropriate for someone with arthritis. An experienced yoga teacher will be able to help make sure you don't injure yourself. Aim for three sessions a week, as long as you're not aggravating your joints. Chair pose may be especially helpful for people with osteoarthritis of the knee (the most common type).

—Steffany Haaz, Ph.D., yoga instructor and health behaviorist at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore