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Supplements & Natural Therapies

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The key to relief from most ailments today is in exercise and a healthy diet. And so, Physicians are now leaning toward a measured use of supplements and natural therapies in combination with an array of treatment methods - for arthritis pain relief.

Exercise/physical therapy

Physical therapy is a treatment option that uses exercises designed to improve posture, strength, function, range of motion, and to reduce pain. It boosts energy and mood as well. A patient who is new to exercise might begin a program of strengthening, stretching and aerobics by seeing a physical therapist twice a week for 12 weeks. Exercise works for any kind of arthritis, including [OA](#), [rheumatoid arthritis \(RA\)](#) and [ankylosing spondylitis](#).

Heat/cold

As muscle spasms can cause basic constriction of blood flow, heat works by increasing the blood flow to the [painful] area, relaxing the muscles. Cold sensations travel along large nerve fibers, superseding pain sensations that travel along smaller fibers. Cold also reduces swelling and inflammation by constricting the blood vessels. Heat works better than cold for [osteoarthritis](#) pain. Heated paraffin wax baths can be helpful for patients with [RA](#), especially their hands - as long as they're not having a flare. Cold works best for inflammation caused by injuries like sprains, strains and pulled muscles and ligaments.

Acupuncture

An ancient Chinese therapy that involves placing tiny needles along meridians in the body to release trapped energy or chi, this increases the production of endorphins, morphine-like substances that are natural pain relievers. It also improves blood flow to the area, and helps get rid of by-products like lactic acid that cause pain. Acupuncture is appropriate for any kind of arthritis pain - almost any kind of pain.

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