



Our May '07 Newsletter: Let us know if you'd like to be added to the email list!

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May is National Arthritis Month - a month devoted to promoting awareness about arthritis. Over 1 in 5 Americans report doctor-diagnosed arthritis, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Nearly a million Americans will be diagnosed with arthritis this year alone. Over the next two decades as the population ages, the number of people with arthritis will reach 67 million.

For most people arthritis pain and inflammation cannot be avoided as the body ages. In fact, most people over the age of 50 show some signs of arthritis. Joints naturally degenerate over time. Fortunately, arthritis can often be managed Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine.

What is Arthritis?

Arthritis isn't just 1 disease; it's a complex disorder that comprises more than 100 distinct conditions and can affect people at any stage of life. Two of the most common forms are osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. While these 2 forms of arthritis have very different causes, risk factors, and effects on the body, they often share a common symptom—persistent joint pain.

Diagnosis and Treatment of Arthritis with Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine

According to Chinese medical theory, arthritis arises when the cyclical flow of Qi in the meridians becomes blocked. This blockage is called, "bi" type pain and is widely studied and successfully treated using a combination of acupuncture and/or Chinese herbs.

Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine have been found to be extremely effective at treating the pain and inflammation associated with all types of arthritis. The acupuncture points and herbs that are used depend on if the blockage of Qi (arthritis) is caused by the pathogen wind, cold, damp or damp-heat.



ACUPUNCTURE FOR ARTHRITIS RESEARCH AND STUDIES FOOD FOR JOINT PAIN HEALTH TIPS



May is National Arthritis Month and there's no better time to take action. Here are some healthy (and delicious) choices to include in your diet.

- **Ginger** - A natural anti-inflammatory, available as powdered extracts in capsules as well as alcohol-based extracts. Follow the dosing directions on the label. Or make tea by combining one-half teaspoon of grated ginger root with eight ounces of boiling water. Cover and steep for 10 to 15 minutes, then strain and add honey to taste.

- **Fresh pineapple** - Bromelain, an enzyme in pineapple, reduces inflammation. Be sure the pineapple is fresh, not canned or frozen.

Traditional Chinese Medicine does not recognize arthritis as one particular syndrome. Instead, it aims to treat the specific symptoms that are unique to each individual using a variety of techniques such as acupuncture, Chinese herbs, bodywork, lifestyle/dietary recommendations and energetic exercises to restore imbalances found in the body. Therefore, if 10 patients are treated with Oriental medicine for joint pain, each of these 10 patients will receive a unique, customized treatment with different acupuncture points, different herbs/supplements and different lifestyle and diet recommendations.

Your acupuncturist will examine you, take a look at the onset of your condition and learn your signs and symptoms to determine your Chinese diagnosis and choose the appropriate acupuncture points and treatment plan.

Studies on Acupuncture and Arthritis

Acupuncture can reduce pain and improve mobility in arthritis patients by 40 percent, scientists say. They announced the finding after conducting one of the world's longest and largest clinical trials to investigate the ancient Chinese needle treatment.

A total of 570 patients aged 50 and older with osteoarthritis of the knee took part in the American study. All had suffered significant pain in their knee the month before joining the trial, but had never experienced acupuncture.

By the eighth week, genuine acupuncture patients showed a significant increase in function compared with both the sham treatment and self-help groups. By week 14, they were also experiencing a significant decrease in pain.

In another study 25 percent of arthritis patients who had been scheduled for knee surgery cancelled their operations after acupuncture treatment. In this Scandinavian study, researchers compared acupuncture with advice and exercise for the treatment of osteoarthritis of the hip. Thirty-two patients awaiting a total hip replacement were separated into 2 groups. One group received one 10-minute and five 25-minute sessions of acupuncture, and the other group received advice and hip exercises over a 6-week period.

Patients were assessed for pain and functional ability: Patients in the acupuncture group showed significant improvements, while no significant changes were reported in the group that received advice and exercise therapy. The results of this study indicate that acupuncture is more effective than advice and exercise for the treatment of osteoarthritis of the hip.

- **Cherries** - Recent research has shown that tart cherries are an excellent source of nutrients that may help to reduce joint pain and inflammation related to arthritis.

- **Fish** - Cold-water fish such as salmon and mackerel contain omega-3 fatty acids, which help keep joints healthy as well as reduce pain and swelling. If you don't care for fish, consider supplementing your diet with fish oil capsules.

- **Turmeric** - Another natural anti-inflammatory. Look for an extract of whole turmeric, in health-food stores; follow the dosage directions on the label.

The Arthritis Foundation recommends the following tips to reduce the impact of arthritis:

- **Get Active** - Regular physical activity helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints. **Tai Chi, a Chinese exercise that strengthens muscles, improves balance and flexibility, and promotes relaxation, has shown a huge benefit to relief of chronic joint pain.**

- **Control Weight** - Maintaining an appropriate weight or reducing weight to a recommended level reduces the risk of osteoarthritis. Losing just 10 pounds relieves 40 pounds of pressure on knees. For those living with symptoms, losing 15 pounds can cut knee pain in half.

- **Modify Job Tasks** - Repeated use of joints in jobs that require bending and lifting is associated with an increased risk of developing osteoarthritis. Speak with a health care professional about ways to reduce strain on your joints.

