

your **healthy** living

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Natural ways to support joint health, readers' health questions answered, top giveaway prizes, plus the latest news and research on natural health and wellbeing

JOINT *effort*



How to care for your joints naturally

Nutrition and exercise both play an important role in supporting the health of our joints. Here are some expert tips for how to look after your joints the natural way.

“Firstly, I recommend maintaining a healthy weight,” says registered nutritionist Caroline Farrell (www.carolinefarrell.com). “Excess body weight places added stress on joints, especially the knees, hips, and spine. Maintaining a healthy weight through a balanced diet can reduce the risk of joint problems.”

Caroline also recommends avoiding excessive sugar and processed foods. She says: “High sugar and processed foods can promote inflammation in the body. Reducing their consumption can help protect joint health.” She adds that staying hydrated is another top tip. “Proper hydration is essential for joint lubrication and overall health. Water is the best choice, but herbal teas and low-sugar beverages can also contribute to hydration,” she explains. Here are some more of Caroline’s nutritional recommendations:

Omega-3 fatty acids

Omega-3 fatty acids, found in fatty fish like salmon, flaxseeds, and walnuts, have anti-inflammatory properties that can help reduce joint inflammation and pain.

Antioxidant-rich foods

Foods high in antioxidants, such as berries, dark leafy greens, and colourful vegetables, can help protect joint tissues from oxidative stress and inflammation.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C is essential for collagen production, which is crucial for healthy cartilage and joint function. Citrus fruits, strawberries and bell peppers are excellent sources of vitamin C.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D is necessary for calcium absorption and overall bone health. Sunlight exposure and vitamin D-rich foods like fatty fish and fortified dairy products can help.

Calcium

Adequate calcium intake supports strong bones and may help prevent joint problems. Dairy products, leafy greens, and fortified foods are good sources.

Turmeric and curcumin

Turmeric contains curcumin, a compound with anti-inflammatory properties. Adding turmeric to your diet or taking curcumin supplements may help to manage joint pain.

Ginger

Ginger has natural anti-inflammatory properties and may reduce joint pain and swelling. Incorporate fresh or powdered ginger into your meals or drinks.

Green tea

Green tea contains polyphenols with anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. It may help to reduce the risk of joint damage.

Collagen

Collagen supplements may support joint health by providing the building blocks for cartilage and connective tissue. Consult with a healthcare provider before taking supplements.

How can exercise help?

“A recent study suggested that various exercise training options have beneficial effects on knee osteoarthritis and therefore could be useful for other joint pains,” says Matthew Glithero osteopath and Pilates instructor at the Wellthy Clinic in Marylebone (wellthyclinic.com). “Among the different exercise interventions, aerobic exercise, which alleviates pain and improves physical function, is the most widely used. In addition, strength training was found to be the most effective exercise therapy against muscle weakness. Neuromuscular exercise and balance training are found to be the best exercise training options to improve proprioception, sensorimotor control and functional stability. Interestingly, aquatic exercise has fewer side effects than other exercise training, so could also be a good form of exercise for joint problems.”

The benefits of Pilates

“Mind-body exercises are gradually being used more to treat joint pains,” says Matthew. “Another recent study suggested that Pilates was significantly effective in reducing back pain, neck pain and pain associated with knee osteoarthritis and osteoporosis. We have noticed multiple benefits of Pilates for joint pain with our own Pilates clients by improving functionality of movement. Pilates could help by reducing joint pains, increasing strength, balance, and flexibility. However, as other studies have suggested, when selecting a rehab programme it’s important to select individualised safe exercises which are appropriate for you and your joint pain.”