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Subject: The six best natural painkillers

The six best natural painkillers

Thousands of people came to my recent Natural Pain Killer lecture series and I heard remarkable stories of recovery, from previously crippled arthritics who are now completely symptom free, to chronic headache and IBS sufferers now in the clear. In my lecture I talked about the importance of healing the gut, easily damaged by painkillers, with a combination of digestive enzymes, probiotics and glutamine, and [identifying and eliminating food allergies](#). The other key is the right combination of natural pain killers.

These are my top six.

1. Turmeric contains curcumin

Curcumin, the active ingredient in the yellow curry spice turmeric, works as well as anti-inflammatory drugs, but without the side effects. Like NSAIDs, it blocks the formation of the pro-inflammatory prostaglandins (PGE2), as well as leukotrienes. In fact, it turns out to be what everyone hoped drugs like Vioxx would be and has been used for its medicinal properties in Ayurveda for hundreds of years. There is no evidence of any downsides, even in high doses of 8g a day.

2. Olives contain two potent painkillers

Like turmeric, olive extract decreases levels of pro-inflammatory substances. Studies on olive pulp extract have shown that it reduces levels of two inflammatory messengers called TNF-alpha and interleukin-8. In fact one study with mice found that the extract reduced TNF-alpha levels by 95%. Some of the newest pain-killing drugs work by reducing TNF-alpha.

3. An extract of hops is an anti-inflammatory

An extract from hops, called isooxylene, is one of the most effective natural painkillers of all. It works just as well as painkilling drugs. Not only is it almost as effective as ibuprofen but it also doesn't have the gut-related side effects of anti-inflammatory drugs. This is because ibuprofen also inhibits COX-1 (the so called 'good' COX, because it produces prostacyclin, which protects the gut lining), whereas the hop extract does not.

4. Quercetin – a red onion a day

Many plant foods contain flavonoid compounds, which are known to inhibit inflammation. One of the most potent is quercetin. One red onion, or a cup of berries, or three servings of greens provides about 10mg of quercetin. Other good sources of quercetin include red wine, tea, grapefruit, broccoli, squash, red grapes, cranberries and citrus fruits. This is one reason why vegetarian diets have proven highly effective in reducing pain and inflammation. However, taking fifty times this amount, 500mg a day, quercetin becomes a potent anti-inflammatory inhibiting the production of the pro-inflammatory prostaglandins (type 2) and also inhibiting the release of histamine, which is involved in inflammatory reactions.

5. Glucosamine works better with MSM

Glucosamine is proven to slow progression of osteoarthritis of the knee. Good quality evidence shows it works as well as ibuprofen but with less side-effects. In four high-quality 2005 studies that gave glucosamine sulphate versus NSAIDs, the glucosamine worked better in two, and was equivalent to the NSAIDs in the other two.

Although there is evidence that chondroitin works, the research does not show that it works better than glucosamine. Most of the research has been done using glucosamine sulphate, but the most absorbable form is glucosamine hydrochloride. Promising results are reported for pain relief and relief from arthritis in people taking daily supplements supplying 1 to 3g of one of the most effective sources of sulphur, methylsulfonylmethane (MSM). A combination of both glucosamine and MSM is particularly effective.

6. EPA rich Omega 3 reduces joint pain

There's no question about the benefits of upping your intake of omega 3s. A meta-analysis of 17 randomized, controlled trials assessing the pain relieving effects of omega-3 PUFAs in patients with **rheumatoid arthritis** or joint pain found that supplementation with EPA rich Omega 3 fats for 3-4 months reduces patient reported joint pain intensity, minutes of morning stiffness, number of painful and/or tender joints and NSAID consumption.

Putting it all together

The real magic comes when you take all these together. In practical terms this means both eating more of all these foods on a daily basis and supplementing 2 EPA rich omega 3 fish oil capsules, aiming for 1,000mg of EPA and day and combination supplements of the other natural remedies discussed above. You need at least 1 gram of glucosamine to make a difference and almost as much MSM. With the right combination formula containing most of the above you'll probably need 2 a day to maintain freedom from pain, 4 a day if you are in pain and 6 a day for acute pain. If you'd like to know more details about the exact doses, and the research, read the new edition of my book [Say No to Arthritis](#).

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