

“Help! My joints hurt!”

Nearly 26% of us have some form of arthritis or joint pain, according to the Arthritis Foundation. Thankfully, our experts reveal several easy ways you can protect your joints!

1 Motion is lotion!

There's a saying in medicine that motion is lotion for your joints. And there's plenty of proof: “Studies on healthy folks have shown that when you immobilize a joint in a sling for six weeks, symptoms similar to rheumatoid arthritis are triggered,” reveals arthritis expert Barbara Allan. “Unlike muscles, joints don't have circulation, so the only way to flush out the inflammation that causes pain is to move. Stretching or getting up to take short walks every hour or so can help lubricate joints and keep them healthy.”



Three moves to do in 10 minutes!

● **Protect hip joints with “tummy time!”**
“Tight muscles often create misaligned joints,” notes Joseph H. Tieri, M.D. The cure? A few easy movements you can do in 10 minutes to realign your joints, he says. First up: Just lie down on your tummy! “When we sit for a long time, our hip flexor muscles tighten up, which can trigger pain in our hip joints,” Dr. Tieri explains. “Just lying down on your stomach and resting your head on your hands in front of you helps lengthen and stretch your back, taking pressure off your hips. If you can, come up a little bit onto your elbows.”



Your joint-protecting menu!

- **Tea!** White, green and oolong teas contain anti-inflammatory compounds and catechins, which preliminary research suggests prevent the breakdown of cartilage. Aim for two to four cups a day, says expert Carol Eustice.
- **Yellow, red or orange bell peppers!** They're a top source of beta-carotene, a nutrient that eases joint pain—plus they're packed with vitamin C, an antioxidant and a major component of cartilage!
- **Spices!** Cooking with lots of herbs and spices packed with beneficial phytonutrients—such as basil, cinnamon, curry powder, chili peppers, ginger, rosemary and turmeric—can have a powerful pain-reducing effect, Eustice says.

● **Protect shoulder joints by opening wide!**
“Most tasks involving the shoulders cause us to lean forward, rounding the shoulders and causing joint pain,” says Dr. Tieri. The fix? Lie flat on your back, and place a rolled-up towel along the length of your spine to prop up your trunk and rest your head. Extend your arms at your sides like a “T”. “This gentle stretch helps correct the constant creeping forward of the shoulders.”

● **Protect knee joints with squats!**
“Strong leg muscles help support the knee joint, but after about age 45 those muscles become 1% weaker each year,” says Dr. Tieri. Walking up slight hills and taking the stairs can help by strengthening your thighs. Or simply squat your way stronger! Standing in front of a chair with your hips shoulder-width apart, lower your body as if you're about to sit, making sure your knees don't extend past your big toe.

2 Take these!

Mussel up!

One super potent source of joint-protecting Omega-3s? Green-lipped mussels, native to New Zealand, reveals Allan. They're especially rich in a type of omega-3 that targets the chemicals that trigger joint pain. One option: Food Science of Vermont Sea Mussel, \$20 at SwansonVitamins.com. (Do not take if allergic to shellfish.)



Pop the “pineapple” pill!

One supplement that seems especially effective at promoting joint health is bromelain, a unique set of enzymes found in pineapples, Dr. Tieri says. Not only does it help tame inflammation, it's shown to improve flexibility and mobility in patients with both rheumatoid and osteoarthritis. One option: Source Naturals Bromelain; \$8.25, GNC.com.

—Kristina Mastrocola

Our expert panel



Barbara Allan is the author of *Conquering Arthritis*, which details the all-natural approaches she used to recover from her own arthritis. Find out more at ConqueringArthritis.com.



Joseph H. Tieri, M.D., author of *End Everyday Pain for 50+: A 10-Minute-a-Day Program of Stretching, Strengthening and Movement to Break the Grip of Pain*, practices medicine in Stone Ridge, New York (EndEverydayPain.com).



Registered medical technologist **Carol Eustice**, author of *The Everything Health Guide to Arthritis and Natural Arthritis Treatment*, is a member of the Association of Rheumatology Health Professionals (ARHP).