

Arthritis and Back Pain: Restoring Function

KEY WORDS

pain, arthritis, osteoarthritis, boswellia, curcumin, devil's claw, Indian gooseberry, amla, cartilage, collagen, joints, cushioning, *Boswellia serrata*, *Curcuma longa*, *Emblica officinalis*, *Harpagophytum procumbens*, back pain, glucosamine sulfate, chondroitin, chondrocytes, harpagosides

If you have osteoarthritis, you are not alone. It is the most common of all joint diseases, accounting for about half of the arthritis diagnoses in the United States and affects approximately **21 million** Americans.

But as powerful (and frightening) as these numbers sound, they can only hint at the overall impact of osteoarthritis, which keeps people from working, enjoying vacations, and just getting around for everyday activities. And when the back is involved, arthritic changes can greatly compromise spinal function. Osteoarthritis sends people to doctor's offices and pain clinics and makes potentially dangerous and damaging prescription drugs seem like an attractive option.

There is a better solution.

There are four herbs that have been extensively researched to relieve pain and support the delicate structure and smooth functioning of the spine and joints.

What is Osteoarthritis?

Because they sound similar, it's understandable that people may confuse osteoporosis, a degeneration of bone tissue, with osteoarthritis, a degeneration of the joints.

Osteoarthritis is a form of joint disease that develops when cartilage deteriorates. Over time, the space between bones narrows and the surfaces of the bones change shape, leading eventually to friction and joint damage.

Osteoarthritis often affects more than one joint, and while it can affect any joint in the body, some joints are affected much more often than others. For example, osteoarthritis is quite common in the hip, knee, lower back, neck, and certain finger joints, but it is rare in the elbow.

Because the risk of developing osteoarthritis increases with age, this form of arthritis is expected to become even more prevalent as the population of the United States grows older.

Who Gets Osteoarthritis?

About equal numbers of men and women have osteoarthritis, but it tends to affect them differently. Men typically develop symptoms before age 45 while women usually don't have symptoms until after age 55. Women more often have osteoarthritis in the hands and knees.

Men are more likely to have it in the hips, knees and spine. Women are ten times more likely to develop Heberden's nodes, a type of osteoarthritis in which hard, bony growths form on the joint nearest the fingertip.

As I mentioned earlier, drugs are not typically the best answer for osteoarthritis. All of them come with serious side effects, including nausea, liver damage, and stomach bleeding – to name a few. Not only that, but while they may eliminate pain, they do nothing for the deterioration of the joints.

But is Glucosamine Sulfate the Only Alternative?

One of the natural alternatives for joint pain, inflammation, and structural support that has been well-received in the past 15 years is glucosamine sulfate (GS).

Because of the lengthy time that glucosamine sulfate (GS) has been on the market, with better than fair results for joint support, it has gained a wide reputation for joint health with many doctors suggesting its use for elderly patients.

To your good health,
Terry... Naturally




The clinical reports on GS indicate that about 40% of individuals placed on GS will experience benefits after about three months. But as time moves on, so does research. And because of this, **I can recommend several herbal ingredients that are far more effective than GS.**

Three of these herbs come from India and one from South Africa. The first and foremost in relieving pain and improving joint function is a clinically-studied, highly absorbable curcumin extract from turmeric (*Curcuma longa*). The problem with most curcumin extracts is that they don't absorb well in the digestive tract, so they can't exert their effects on inflammation very well, or for very long. That's why I recommend a highly-effective micronized curcumin extract which is re-blended with the essential oil of turmeric **for up to 10 times the absorption of standard 95% curcumin extracts.**

The second Indian herb, **boswellia**, (*Boswellia serrata*) has been used for thousands of years to relieve pain and inflammation. Its actions are very similar to our current drugs that are reported to be COX-2 inhibitors – but without the side effects. In fact, a unique combination of bioavailable curcumin and boswellia was judged to be superior to the prescription

More...

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arthritis drug, celecoxib (the generic of the brand name Celebrex®) in a clinical study of osteoarthritis.¹

Individuals in this 12 week study were randomized to two groups. One group received celecoxib, 100 mg, twice daily and the second group received a 500 mg blend of the highly absorbable curcumin and boswellia extract twice daily.

When it came to relieving pain, 64% of those taking the herbal ingredients versus 29% in the drug group improved to such a high degree that they were able to move from having “moderate to severe arthritis” to “mild to moderate arthritis.”

At the end of the study 93% of the herbal treated subjects could walk more than 1000 meters vs. 86% in the drug group. 93% of the herbal group reported improvement in or elimination of pain vs. 79% of the drug group. Both groups had equal and significant improvements in range of motion. There were no serious adverse events in the study.

The boswellia extract I recommend – and the one used in this study – has reduced levels of beta-boswellic acids, which can otherwise be pro-inflammatory, and was standardized to more than 10% AKBA, the most anti-inflammatory compound in the extract.

Curcumin and boswellia are two key players in the combination you want, because they reduce the activity of the two most significant pain pathways in the body – COX-2 and 5-LOX. Of course, it's not just about relieving pain – it's about relieving the tissue-damaging inflammation that *causes* pain. That's why these two ingredients are so important. When you use them, you're not just “covering up” the pain signals your body sends out; you're helping your body heal.

Plus, these natural compounds have been around for thousands of years while the drugs that are being prescribed for arthritis are totally

synthetic and have never before been on this planet before some scientist concocted them. I think I would prefer Mother Nature over what was fabricated in the laboratory and comes with serious side effects. Certainly, there are occasions when drugs are necessary, and I am not against their use but when you can choose a natural alternative that has as good a result as the drugs that are prescribed, I would always choose the natural solution.

The third herb, **Indian Gooseberry** (*Emblica officinalis*) – also known as “amla” – has anti-inflammatory benefits and helps rebuild healthy collagen and cartilage.

Then add to this trio of Indian herbs, **Devil's Claw** (*Harpagophytum procumbens*) from South Africa, which has powerful anti-inflammatory benefits for relieving arthritis and back pain.

Devil's Claw has been used for centuries by the native people of South Africa, treating pain with the dried roots of the plant. Holistic physicians including Dr. Andrew Weil and Dr. Tieraona Low Dog, M.D., have recognized the plant's ability to relieve the pain and stiffness of osteoarthritis and low back pain.

According to Dr. Low Dog, Devil's Claw is so highly prescribed and respected in European countries that it accounts for 74% of all prescriptions written for arthritic complaints. But it's important to realize that not all Devil's Claw extracts are equally prepared. Many of them are only standardized at 2% harpagosides, the plant's key compound. However, there is a specialized extract standardized to 20% harpagosides, with documented advantages.

First, it inhibits COX-2 by 31%. This is a huge breakthrough compared to past alternative or natural ingredients, including glucosamine and chondroitin, which has never shown this kind of intense effect.

Additionally, Devil's Claw has been clinically shown to build up the joint structure by

increasing hyaluronic acid synthesis in chondrocytes – the cells that produce and maintain joint-cushioning cartilage. This has amazing benefits for anyone with arthritis, because it can **improve joint lubrication by up to 41%!**

Four Herbal Ingredients for Powerful Results

The pain and stiffness of arthritis and back pain are difficult to live with, and the prescription drugs so often used to treat it can create devastating complications. The combination I've discussed here provides an entirely different approach; one that relieves pain, and helps rebuild the cushioning structure of the joints and vertebrae. Simply allow it some time, and stick with the recommended dosages. But if you're tired of conventional approaches to dealing with osteoarthritis, maybe it's time to consider these amazing, effective ingredients and rediscover mobility without the risks. **TN**

1. Antony B, Kizhakedath R, Benny M, Kuruvilla BT. Clinical Evaluation of a herbal product (RhuLief™) in the management of knee osteoarthritis. Abstract 316. Osteoarthritis Cartilage. 2011;19(S1):S145-S146.

Terry recommends a product with these ingredients.

Proprietary Formula 1,050 mg
Containing Boswellia (*Boswellia serrata*)
Gum Resin Extract standardized to contain
>70% boswellic acids with AKBA
>15%, with less than 5% beta-boswellic
acids, Curcumin (*Curcuma longa*)
Rhizome Extract with curcuminoid
complex (curcumin, demethoxycurcumin
and bisdemethoxycurcumin), Devil's
Claw (*Harpagophytum procumbens*)
Extract standardized to contain >20%
harpagosides (by HPLC), Indian Gooseberry
(*Emblica officinalis*) Extract standardized
to contain >30% total polyphenol content
with embilicanins >20%