



WellnessOne Newsletter

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Falling for This "Urban Myth" Can Damage Your Joints

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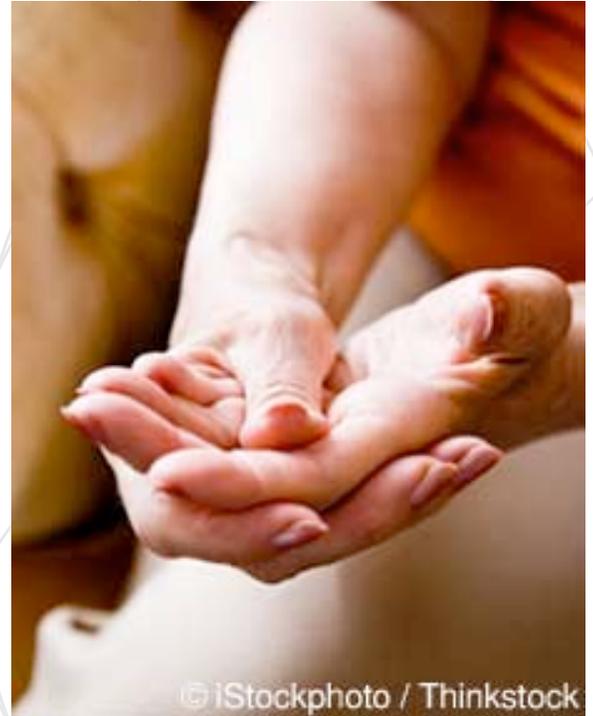
There has been a surprising jump in the number of Americans with severe arthritis symptoms. This could be the result of obesity, according to health experts.

About 22 percent of U.S. adults have arthritis, a total of nearly 50 million people with the ailment. This number has not increased much in the past few years. What has increased significantly, however, is pain or other arthritis symptoms that limit activity.

That number has jumped from 8.3 percent to 9.4 percent -- which means that more than 21 million adults now have trouble climbing stairs, dressing, or gardening, up from less than 19 million just a few years ago.

Sources:

» [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report \(MMWR\)
October 8, 2010 / 59\(39\):1261-1265](#)



Dr. Mercola's Comments:

More than 21 million Americans have trouble climbing stairs, getting dressed and staying active due to arthritis, a number that has jumped from 19 million just a few years back. In this case the rise is attributed primarily to cases of osteoarthritis among baby boomers, especially those who are overweight or obese.

Osteoarthritis is a degenerative joint disease that usually occurs in older individuals, but can also be caused by repetitive stress or acute trauma. This should not be confused with [rheumatoid arthritis](#), which is an autoimmune disease that causes your body to break itself down.

Osteoarthritis usually affects the distal joints, or the joints at the end of your fingers and toes, and is generally attributed to wear-and-tear on your joints due to lifestyle, diet and aging.

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A Healthy Lifestyle is Your Best Osteoarthritis Defense

Arthritis rates are more than twice as high in obese people as those who are normal weight, because the extra weight puts more pressure on your joints. This can not only lead to osteoarthritis, it can also make the condition exponentially worse.

So if you are suffering from arthritis and are overweight or obese, losing weight is an essential form of treatment. You will want to jumpstart your weight loss by eating a healthier diet based on the principles of nutritional typing.

Your unique biochemistry and genetics influence the ratio of fat, protein and carbohydrates your body needs to thrive, so eating for your nutritional type will ensure that you get the optimal macronutrient ratio out of your diet, while naturally optimizing your weight.

In fact, whether you are overweight or not, eating for your nutritional type is a standard component of my arthritis treatment protocol. You can [discover your nutritional type now by going to http://products.mercola.com/nutritional-typing/](http://products.mercola.com/nutritional-typing/), in just a few minutes, for free. We previously charged \$29 for this test but we have decided to make it available to more people and offer it for no charge.

Exercise is Essential if You Have Arthritis

The second component you'll want to address, for both weight loss and osteoarthritis prevention and management, is a regular exercise program. Most people have little appreciation for how powerful exercise can be in preserving bone density and joint function, which can help prevent and alleviate osteoarthritis as you age.

The notion that exercise is [detrimental to your joints is a misconception](#); there is no evidence to support this belief. Instead, the evidence points to exercise having a positive impact on joint tissues -- if you exercise sufficiently to lose weight, or maintain an ideal weight, you can in fact reduce your risk of developing osteoarthritis.

My most highly recommended form of exercise is [Peak Fitness](#), and this program can be used by virtually everyone. However, if you've already developed osteoarthritis in your knee, you'll want to incorporate exercises that strengthen the quadriceps muscle at the front of your thigh. And, rather than running or other high-impact exercise, you may be better off with non-weight-bearing exercises like swimming and bicycling.

People with arthritis must be careful to avoid activities that aggravate joint pain. You should avoid any exercise that strains a significantly unstable joint.

That said, it is very important to exercise and increase muscle tone of your non-weight bearing joints. In time, disuse results in muscle atrophy and weakness, and immobility may



result in joint contractures and loss of range of motion (ROM), so it's important to keep moving.

If your joints are stiff, you should stretch and apply heat before exercising, while swollen joints may benefit from applying ice for 10 minutes prior to exercise.

Your program should include a range of activities, just as I recommend for any exerciser. [Weight training](#), cardio, stretching and core work can all be integrated into your routine.

If you find that you're in pain for longer than one hour after your exercise session, you should slow down or choose another form of exercise. Assistive devices are also helpful to decrease the pressure on affected joints during your workout.

There is one exception to this rule: exercise may exacerbate osteoarthritis if you've suffered a prior joint injury. In this case you'll want to work with a physical therapist or qualified personal trainer who can work out a safe range of activities for you.

What Can You do to Help Lessen Osteoarthritis Symptoms?

If you have osteoarthritis, the cartilage within your joint is progressively being damaged, and the synovial fluid that keeps your joints lubricated and cushioned is typically reduced as well.



The pain and joint stiffness that you feel is a result of your bones starting to come into contact with each other as cartilage and synovial fluid is reduced, and if you don't take action it can become progressively worse until you are unable to carry out your normal daily activities.

The good news is that your body is fully capable of rebuilding cartilage and synovial fluid, but in order to effectively do so it needs the proper building blocks: with healthy animal based omega-3 fats.

Animal-based omega-3 fats, such as krill oil, are an essential component that your body needs to reduce inflammation, while glucosamine can help rebuild both cartilage and synovial fluid.

Now, you've probably heard that glucosamine and chondroitin (two animal products marketed as food supplements) can help relieve symptoms of osteoarthritis. However, the results from studies evaluating these supplements have been mixed, and many do not appear to be getting any significant relief from either glucosamine or chondroitin... Recent research, however, indicates there may be a way to significantly boost the [benefits of glucosamine – by combining it with omega-3 fats](#). And it does seem logical that they would provide better pain relief when used together.

Omega-3 is widely recognized for its anti-inflammatory properties, and glucosamine is a precursor for glycosaminoglycans, which are a major component of joint cartilage, which

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explains why it can help prevent the cartilage degeneration that occurs with osteoarthritis. So, although I don't often recommend supplements, using omega-3 in combination with glucosamine might be helpful for some.

That said, other nutritional supplements may offer even greater relief, especially when taken in combination with each other.

Other Natural Options for Pain Relief

Osteoarthritis can be a very painful condition, so pain relief is usually an important component of treatment. Typically, anti-inflammatory drugs like non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs) and analgesics, like Tylenol, are used for this purpose.

However, while these can be effective pain relievers, it's very important to understand that regular, chronic use of these types of medications is associated with significant, and very serious, side effects such as kidney and/or liver damage.

NSAIDs also kill some 30,000 people every year due to bleeding ulcers, and the oral drugs have been linked to a host of problems including [heart failure](#) -- [Vioxx](#) and [Celebrex](#) are prime examples of these very real dangers.



So I recommend that you try out some safer, natural anti-inflammatory alternatives instead, including:

- **Boswellia:** Also known as boswellin or "Indian frankincense," this Indian herb is one treatment I've found to be particularly useful against arthritic inflammation and associated pain.
- **Hyaluronic acid (HA):** Hyaluronic acid is a key component of your cartilage, responsible for moving nutrients into your cells and moving waste out.
- **Astaxanthin:** Astaxanthin is one of the most powerful lipophilic antioxidants yet discovered and is the most abundant carotenoid pigment found in crabs, salmon, trout, shrimp, and krill. Studies have found that it can help support joint health and mobility.
- **Eggshell membrane:** Elastin, collagen and glycosaminoglycans are three nutrients found in eggshell membranes, which can help support the stability and flexibility of your joints by providing your joints with the building blocks needed to build cartilage.
- **Ginger:** This herb is anti-inflammatory and offers pain relief and stomach-settling properties. Fresh ginger works well steeped in boiling water as a tea or grated into vegetable juice.

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- **Bromelain:** This enzyme, found in pineapples, is a natural anti-inflammatory. It can be taken in supplement form, but eating fresh pineapple may also be helpful.
- **Cetyl myristoleate (CMO):** This oil, found in fish and dairy butter, acts as a "joint lubricant" and an anti-inflammatory.
- **Evening primrose, black currant and borage oils:** These contain the essential fatty acid gamma linolenic acid (GLA), which is useful for treating arthritic pain. It is reasonable for many to take these as a supplement, particularly if you struggle with dry skin in the winter, as this is a strong indicator that you are deficient in these fats. I prefer the use of GLA supplements from evening primrose oil but borage oil contains a higher concentration of GLA, which means you need fewer capsules, and it tends to be less expensive.
- **Cayenne Cream:** Also called capsaicin cream, this spice comes from dried hot peppers. It alleviates pain by depleting the body's supply of substance P, a chemical component of nerve cells that transmits pain signals to your brain

Two More Must-Know Osteoarthritis Tips ... Emotions and Vitamin D

Emotional distresses are very often a part of arthritic conditions, so having an effective method to address these can be absolutely priceless in terms of disease prevention and an effective treatment plan.



As [Dr. Christine Northrup](#) wrote:

"... the emotional patterns that are associated with and exacerbate osteoarthritic pain are irritation and frustration. The severity of the problem depends upon how intense these emotions are, and how long they've been present and unresolved.

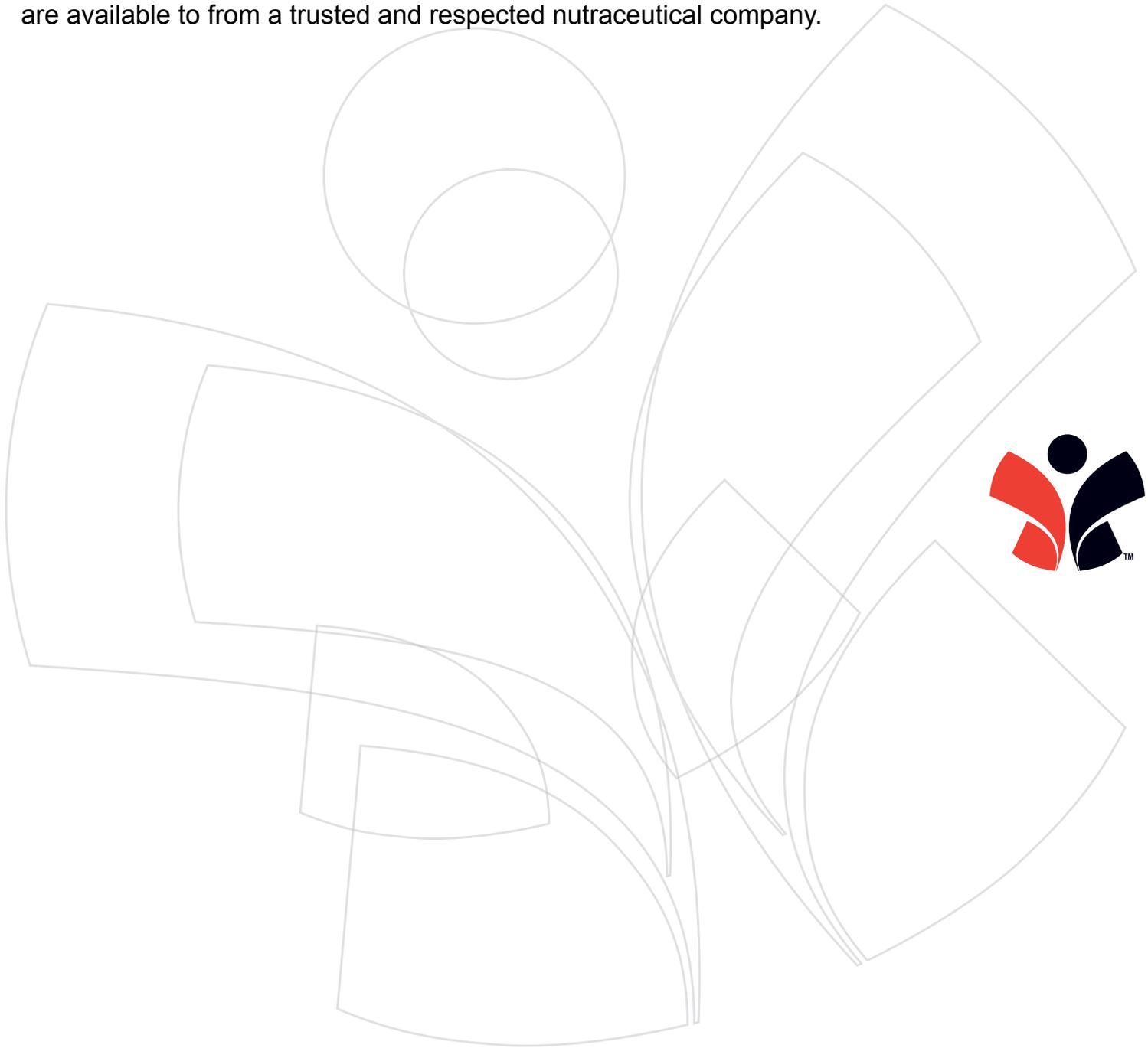
Though all of us have irritation and frustration in our lives, there is no need for it to get stuck in our joints and stay there. Recognize when you are feeling irritated or resentful, remind yourself to breathe deeply, and allow yourself to experience these feelings fully without judging yourself."

Next, you should know that [low levels of vitamin D](#) are associated with cartilage loss in your knees, and this is one of the hallmarks of osteoarthritis. The remedy, to make sure your vitamin D levels are optimized, is simple. It involves [getting your blood levels tested](#), then optimizing them using safe sun exposure, [indoor tanning on a safe tanning bed](#), supplementation with vitamin D3, or a combination of the above.

And please remember, arthritis does not have to be a "terminal" disease. By losing weight, exercising, making changes to your diet and lifestyle, and using natural anti-inflammatory

relief measures you can overcome this disease. You don't have to live in pain forever ...
arthritis can be healed.

Talk to your WellnessOne Practitioner about Vitamin D, glucosamine, and Omega-3 fats. All
are available to from a trusted and respected nutraceutical company.



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