

Natural Pain Relievers

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Pain has many forms – you may feel it as a burn, a tingle, a sting or an ache. When pain is physical, your first impulse may be to reach for a pill. Prescription and over-the-counter painkillers can be dangerous and even toxic to your body which is why it's important to explore alternative, non-invasive treatment options first. Once you receive a pain assessment from your doctor or chiropractor and determine what's causing your physical pain, there are natural pain relief options that can help more than a pill ever could.

Massage

- Ideal for: muscle tension, anxiety, digestive disorders, fibromyalgia, headaches, insomnia, soft tissue strains, sports injuries

There are many different types of massage. After deciding which one is right for you, prepare to reap the benefits. Though many folks are weary at the thought of being touched by a masseuse, studies show that massage is effective for reducing stress, pain, and muscle tension. Some forms of massage can leave you sore the next day, but the massage itself should never feel painful. If any part of your massage doesn't feel right, speak up right away.

Acupuncture

- Ideal for: chronic back pain, migraines, tension headaches, fibromyalgia, arthritis, sciatica

Acupuncture has been used for centuries to treat many conditions and relieve pain. Traditional Chinese acupuncture involves the insertion of extremely fine needles into the skin at specific "acupoints." This relieves pain by releasing endorphins, aka the body's natural pain-killing chemicals, by affecting the part of the brain that fuels serotonin, a brain chemical involved with mood.

Yoga

- Ideal for: low back pain, arthritis, migraines

A study published in *Annals of Internal Medicine* found that among 313 people with chronic low back pain, a weekly yoga class increased mobility more than standard medical care for the condition. This is because yoga is a mind-body exercise practice that combines breath control, meditation, and movements to stretch and strengthen muscles.

In addition to these alternative treatment methods, it doesn't hurt to tweak your diet. After all, keeping your immune system strong is critical to keeping the rest of your body healthy. One of the most powerful tools to combat inflammation doesn't come from the pharmacy; it comes from your food. Try to avoid, or at least limit foods that inflame, such as French fries, soda, red meat, and refined carbohydrates. Instead, reach for tomatoes, olive oil, green leafy vegetables, nuts, fatty fish, and fruits.