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To: Dr. David Taylor

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Pain: Putting the Fire Out



Back pain, neck pain, knee pain, foot pain - wherever the pain is, it's a pretty powerful motivator. In fact, depending on the severity of the pain, you may be willing to do just about anything to get rid of it. That's why so many people rush to the medicine cabinet and pop a few pills at the first sign of pain. Here's a much better idea: Ask your chiropractor about these simple exercises that can actually help reduce pain caused by common overuse conditions.

You wake up at night with numbness and tingling in your hands. Sleeping through the night is almost an impossible task. You may be suffering from carpal tunnel syndrome, a condition in which nerves from your neck traveling into your hand can become compressed in the wrist.

What you can do: Extend (straighten) your arm out in front of your body with your palm facing up. Straighten your fingers, keeping them close together. Bend your wrist backward and try to point your fingers toward the floor, and with the opposite hand press down on the palm side of your fingers to bend (extend) your wrist slightly further. Hold this stretch for 2 seconds, return the wrist to a straight position, and then repeat the entire movement for 10 repetitions

Do you feel clicking and popping in your knee? Perhaps walking up and down stairs has become a challenge and taking those after-dinner walks is more and more difficult. Knee pain can be a tricky condition because proper motion depends on the functioning of the hips and ankles.

What you can do: Stand on the edge of a step with the balls of your feet. Make sure you have something to hold on to for balance. Keep a slight bend in your knees and let your heels drift downward towards the floor, so your toes are higher than your heels. Sink the heels downward as far as you can and hold for 5 seconds. You can progress to one foot at a time for increased intensity.

Return to the starting position and repeat 10 times.

If you experience sharp pain on the outside of your elbow when trying to twist open a jar or grasping something with your hand, it may be tendonitis of the forearm muscles. This injury became known as tennis elbow because players would get elbow pain after hitting repetitive backswings in tennis.

What you can do: Stand sideways against a wall. Bend your arm 90 degrees at the elbow with the thumb facing up. Place a tennis ball between the top of the forearm and the wall, with the opposite hand press against the inside of your forearm, putting additional pressure into the ball. Move the forearm back and forth in a circular motion on the tennis ball, searching for tender spots. Spend between 30-60 seconds on each tender spot until the pain begins to fade; then search for other tender areas. Do this three to five times per day.

The most important point to remember is that no exercise should make your pain worse. Soreness and discomfort are acceptable and expected; however, increased pain and dysfunction is not. It takes time for an injury to properly heal. Talk to your doctor for more information about what you can do to keep pain away the natural way.

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How Nutrition Can Help Eczema

There are three main objectives in the treatment of eczema: [reducing inflammation](#), relieving itching of the skin, and moisturizing dry patches. As most alternative health practitioners know, certain dietary practices and various supplements can help to accomplish these objectives in many cases of eczema that seem to be resistant to standard medical treatment. The most evidence-based lifestyle, dietary and supplementation strategies shown to improve cases of eczema are as follows:



Dietary and Lifestyle Considerations: Avoid any known dietary or environmental irritants or allergens. Reduce the build-up of the polyunsaturated fat arachidonic acid within skin cells, as it is the direct building block of inflammatory prostaglandin hormones. To accomplish this, reduce the intake of the following foods: high-fat meat and dairy products; corn oil, sunflower seed oil, safflower seed oil, and mixed vegetable oils; alcohol, hydrogenated fats (e.g., margarine, commercial peanut butter, shortenings).

Replace the above foods with the following: chicken, turkey, fish, Cornish hen, 1 percent milk or yogurt, low-fat cheese (3 percent or less milk fat), olive oil, canola oil, or peanut oil (for salad dressings, to sauté vegetables or stir fry only).

Important Supplements: [Omega-3 fats](#) provide the building block for the production of prostaglandin hormones that reduce the inflammatory activity of skin cells. They also reduce the build-up of arachidonic acid in skin cells by blocking the enzyme that converts linoleic acid and gamma-linolenic acid to arachidonic acid. Examples of omega-3 fats of importance to skin health include EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) and ALA (alpha-linolenic acid). EPA is found in fish and fish oils, and ALA is found primarily in flaxseed oil. Clinical trials have shown that omega-3 fats can be

effective in the treatment of eczema.

Gamma-linolenic acid (GLA) has also been shown to help in cases of eczema. Studies reveal that many patients with eczema lack the enzyme to convert linoleic acid to gamma-linolenic acid. As gamma-linolenic acid is the building block of an important anti-inflammatory prostaglandin hormone, supplementation with an oil that is high in gamma-linolenic acid, such as borage, black currant or evening primrose oil, has been shown to favorably affect cases of eczema.

A number of B vitamins (especially B₆ and niacin) are necessary co-factors to speed up the enzymes that produce anti-inflammatory prostaglandins in the skin. Vitamin C, vitamin E, selenium and zinc are also required to support various enzymes within skin cells that promote the formation of prostaglandins, which reduce skin inflammatory conditions, including eczema. I recommend a high-potency multivitamin/mineral supplement that contains a B-50 complex along with boosted levels of antioxidants.

In many cases, once specific allergies have been ruled out, the medical profession is at a loss to provide eczema sufferers with any meaningful treatment options. For this subgroup of patients, specific dietary and supplementation practices outlined in this article can provide significant improvement of their condition in many cases. Your doctor can tell you more about the connection between diet and skin health.

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Lower Sugar, Lower Blood Pressure



Sounds pretty simple, right? Except in a society overwhelmed by processed foods loaded with [added sugar](#), keeping your sugar (or blood pressure) in check can be a major challenge.

But let's leave the topic of limiting sugar consumption from all sources for another day, and instead focus on sugar from a single source: sugar-sweetened beverages. According to a study published in the June 2010 issue of *Circulation* (a journal of the American Heart Association), a reduction in sugar-sweetened beverage consumption of one serving per day reduced systolic blood pressure in adults by 1.8 mg Hg and diastolic blood pressure by 1.1 mg Hg over 18 months. (If your [blood pressure](#) is 120-75, for example, your systolic blood pressure is 120 and your diastolic blood pressure is 75.) Diet beverage consumption and caffeine intake did not appear to be associated with blood pressure.

Remember, even a small reduction, particularly if all you have to do is drink less sugar-sweetened beverages, can make a big difference. In fact, it might save your life. Your doctor can tell you more - much more - about the considerable dangers of sugar *and* high blood pressure.

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