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Osteoarthritis

By the time we're in our 50s, most of us have some wear and tear on our joints from injuries, repetitive strain or from habitual postural patterns. I hear people say they rely on vitamin I and T (ibuprofen and Tylenol) to deal with their discomfort. There are many naturopathic and non-pharmaceutical approaches to treating arthritis.

1. Address the structural imbalance that aggravates the joint. This may require physical therapy, chiropractic, massage therapy or movement therapies such as specific stretching programs or yoga.
2. Provide nutrients needed for healthy bones, joints and muscles. These may include more protein, calcium, magnesium, vitamin C and D and glucosamine.
3. Address inflammation. We have at least 8 different biological path ways for inflammation and each individual loads these up according to their genetic blue print. That's why aspirin, Tylenol or ibuprofen works for some but not for others. Omega 3 fish oil, with balanced omega 6 and E in the diet can help with inflammatory discomfort. For some, curcumin, quercetin, turmeric or boswellia provides some relief.

A recent herbal formula I've started prescribing appears to be quite therapeutic. 'Sculacia" is a combination of 2 herbs, Scutellaria baicalensis and Acacia catechu. This is actually available as a prescription med called "Limbrel" and in studies, is just as effective as Naprosyn without the stomach and anticlotting side effects. It takes 7 to 10 days to take effect and can be taken long term but ... naturopathically speaking, the goal is to heal the joints, if possible, not to just eliminate the symptoms, so step 1 and 2 above, are just as important.