

May Newsletter

An Even Vida Clinic

Flexibility, Joint Stiffness, Pain & Arthritis

“Today, it is estimated that over 50 million Americans suffer from chronic arthritis” (1). It has become the number one cause of disability. Arthritis is only one of the many conditions that affect our joints. At the base of all of these joint conditions is inflammation. *Inflammation is a neurological and chemical imbalance.*

There are two basic types of arthritis. One is inflammatory and one is degenerative. Inflammation is the basis of the degenerative type as well.

Degenerative arthritis is commonly called osteoarthritis. It is caused by repetitive stress on the joints or decreased range of motion of a joint. This repeated stress or decreased range of motion causes low levels of inflammation which slowly cause changes in the joint like roughening and breakdown of the cartilage.

The **inflammatory arthritis** family includes conditions like rheumatoid, lupus and gout. Here the inflammation is much more severe causing greater breakdown of the joints. These are autoimmune reactions. This neuro-immune involvement affects more parts in your body, including multiple joints as well as the immune system which includes your thymus gland, your lymph nodes, spleen, and nervous system.

If we take a broader view of arthritis, these two types are the same. It is just that one is more severe/systemic than the other and is caused by different conditions; inflammation versus repetitive abnormal joint movement. Meaning that inflammation causes the inflammatory type, where as the degenerative type results in inflammation. Keep in mind that the degenerative type can lead to the inflammatory type, causing rheumatoid, lupus or gout.

In both groups, there is a change in the underlying bone of the joints, changes in the synovial (lubricating) membranes causing swelling of the joint and finally the formation of bone spurs around the joint as a result of the chronic inflammation.



When the joints of osteoarthritis are examined, it is found that they contain chemicals of inflammation called cytokines.

The major site of damage in arthritis is in the cartilage, which is a minimally oxygenated tissue that lies in the center of the joint. Cartilage is composed of cells called chondrocytes. These special cells produce the matrix of the cartilage which consists of collagen and proteoglycans.

When excessive pressure by inflammation or repetitive abnormal movement is applied to the joints, destructive enzymes are produced in the cartilage that triggers inflammation. These enzymes slowly kill off the chondrocytes and the joint deteriorates, as the proteoglycans are no longer produced.



When the cartilage degenerates, the bones begin to rub against each other changing the surfaces of the bones themselves. Even more destructive enzymes are produced due to this increased friction between the bones and there is more pain and destruction of the bones and the joint structures.

“Recent studies have shown that within the joints of patients suffering with osteoarthritis (degenerative arthritis) is a special form of calcium crystals. These are calcium phosphatate crystals” (2). Meaning that excess or poor sources of calcium can create arthritis too.

Years ago, Selye, who gained fame for his work on stress, wrote a book on inflammation. He said that inflammation existing for a period of time any where in your body would lead to calcification.

So to recap, “inflammation is at the root of all types of arthritis. A joint that moves too much or too little will cause arthritis, which will lead to inflammation. The greater the inflammation, the more systems or parts of your body that will be affected. And finally, inflammation is a neuro-immunological response, together” (4). And together balancing the nerves and the immune system treats arthritis.

A Few Helpful Tips

First, you should not abuse the joints. They are designed to be used in a certain manner. For example, if your pelvis is not level, you can shift up to 65–70% of your weight on to the low pelvic side. This causes abnormal stress on the joints and leads to arthritic changes in the hip socket, knee and foot.

Next, you need to maintain adequate muscle strength to support you and the daily activities that you perform. Think of these as the good physical things that you need to do.

There is little truth in “no pain no gain”.

Another beneficial thing that you can do is to eat a diet high in raw enzymes such as in uncooked vegetables, fruits, sashimi, etc. As well, essential fats like in butter, olive oil, avocados, wild caught fish, etc. These are the colorful things you can put on your plate.

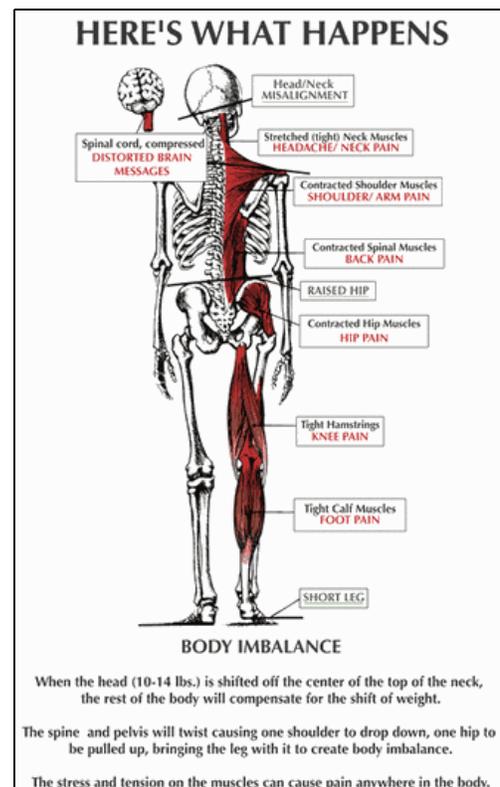
There are many supplements that claim to help slow degenerative arthritis. But the key is to target and manage inflammation.

There also are negative things like smoking, which diminish blood flow in the little capillaries around the joints. Living at higher altitudes can create a higher risk for arthritis over time. Increasing your oxygen with correct breathing techniques and using a hyperbaric oxygen chamber can prevent these changes.

Other harmful factors include things like running on hard surfaces, wearing shoes that are worn out, lifting too much weight, and working out until it hurts.

Regular chiropractic adjustments create a powerful enhancement to both the immune system and neurological systems that are at the root of both types of arthritis.

*Lastly, consider arthritis as a low grade infection in your body. What would you do if you were sick with a fever or your child was sick???



- (1) Center for Disease Control & Prevention. MMWR 2010; 59(39); 1261-1265. {Data Source: 2007-2009 NHIS}
- (2) Pubmed. Curr Opin Rheumatology. 2002; 14 (3): 298-302
- (3) ICAK-USA. Journal News. 2012; 4 #1
- (4) Medical Physiology. Guyton. 11th Edition. 434-436

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