

86 - AYURVEDA IN DISEASES OF THE LOCOMOTOR SYSTEM

• Treatment of joint problems with Ayurveda

- While the role of bones is supporting, joints and connective tissues bind the bones and give our body its flexibility. The quality of our lives also depends on the **health of our joints**. When we have healthy joints, we can fully enjoy our daily lives.
- One of the most common health problems in the locomotors system is joint problems such as **knee pain** as well as **back and waist**, fingers and toes, elbows, ankles and palm **pains**.
- Unfortunately, 80% of the people over the age of 50 complain of certain joint problems. Joint problems can appear due to a variety of reasons: *obesity, poor diet, excessive pressure, stress, inherited condition, metabolic disorders and lifestyle*.
- One of the most common problems affecting mainly the elderly is **osteoarthritis**. It is characterized by the destruction of the **cartilaginous tissue in the joint** with aging which causes inflammation, as a result of which the joints become less mobile due to their **increased density**.
- Joint problems can be prevented or even eliminated with the help of Ayurveda. India's ancient medicine Ayurveda , which is more than 5000 years old, focuses on the long-term removal of a health problem instead of the instant but temporary relief that is the aim of conventional medicine.
- Ayurveda offers a number of therapies that are only performed by an experienced **Ayurveda doctor** and those that everyone can try at home. Its therapies are entirely environmentally friendly and include only natural herbal oils and medicinal products.

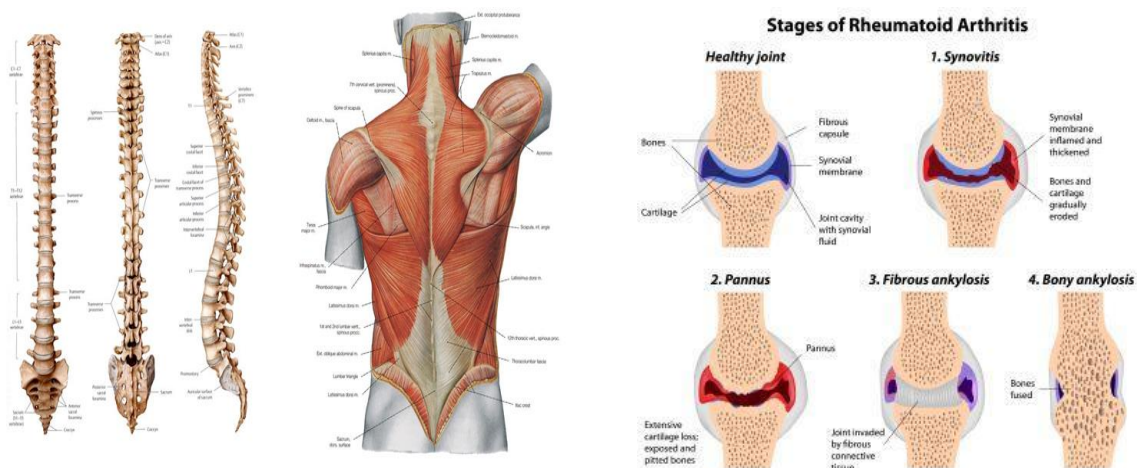
- Ayurveda is a comprehensive
- health system that seeks to
- achieve harmony between body,
- mind and spirit and lifestyle in
- accordance with the laws of
- nature. **Ayurveda** healing
- therapies and **massages** are
- done not only to improve health,
- but also to achieve an **inner balance between spirit and body**.

7 Tips For a Healthy Musculoskeletal System

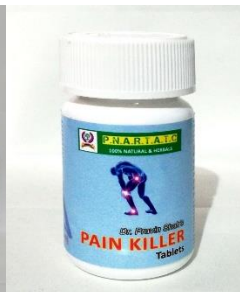


1. Yoga
2. Exercise
3. Dynamic stretching
4. Structural Integration
5. Herbs
6. Nutrients
7. M.E.A.T. for tendon and ligament injuries

- In Ayurveda, there are **three types of doshas (Vata, Pitta and Kapha constitutions)**, which represent three kinds of body types. These three types of doshas represent three types of energies, of which **Vata – the air element**, plays the most vital role for health. Vata's imbalance in the body accounts for about 90% of the health problems.
- **Vata** is responsible for **blood circulation and nerve impulses in the body**. When Vata's balance is disturbed, the first joint problem appears. *Metabolism, blood circulation and normal food absorption are impaired*, as a result of which the bones do not receive the required amount of nutrients.
- These processes lead to a **worsening of the Shleshaka** which is a subdivision of **Kapha** and is responsible for the joint and bone lubrication.
- Shleshaka disturbance leads to inadequate lubrication of the joints, resulting in **discomfort, cracking or creaking** and decreased flexibility as well as **muscle spasms and tics**.
- The ancient medicine Ayurveda distinguishes two major problems related to the joints. The former is associated with **nutrient deficiency** or low bone density, and usually the symptoms of it are a feeling of **weakness, discomfort or cracking**. If this problem is not addressed in time, then **immobility of the joints** can occur over time due to this deficiency in bone substances.
- The second problem is associated with the **accumulation of a large amount of toxins in the body** which also leads to the presence of toxins in the joints. According to **Ayurveda Ama**, which is a toxic, sticky waste product of poor digestion, accumulates in the joints and causes a feeling of numbness and weight, inflammation, redness, swelling. This accumulation of Ama is called **Amavata**.



- If the toxins stay there for a long time, the joint swells and becomes painful. Reasons for the accumulation of these toxins may vary: *poor nutrition, excessive physical pressure, anxiety, alcohol consumption*. This problem may get worse if the weather is humid and cold.
- **What does Ayurveda advise in relation to joint problems?**
- According to Ayurveda, one of the ways to deal with joint problems is by alleviating **Vata**. We can achieve a good balance of Vata and avoid Vata-based problems with the joints by including the **6 basic tastes in our dishes** (sweet, salty, bitter, sour, spicy, tart)
- For a good balance of **Vata dosha**, it is advisable to consume **sweet, sour and salty** and less bitter, spicy or tart foods. Alcohol and refined sugar are excluded and can be replaced with natural non-refined honey.
- The diet, which is suitable for **increasing Vata** and strengthening the locomotory system, includes legumes such as quinoa, amaranth, rye, boiled in water with added ghee butter, and easily digestible Indian dishes such as kitchari.
- The list also includes freshly prepared vegetables of organic origin, mung dal (Indian stew with lentils and various vegetables), sweet and juicy fruits, natural milk which is a good source of calcium, vegetables such as spinach, kale, asparagus, root vegetables, hot water or ginger tea.
- Dairy products like cheese or ice cream should be avoided. An important rule of diet for balancing Vata is that meals are eaten at the same time of day. To reduce Ama, it is also recommended to **eat ghee and linseed**.
- To relieve joint problems, Ayurveda recommends taking a special herbal form called **Santarpana** which literally means “nourishment”.



- In Ayurveda medicine this special formula has been developed based on a special **combination of nourishing herbs** that supply the joints with the necessary substances among which is the easily absorbable calcium that has a strengthening effect on the bone tissue. The formula recovers cartilage and helps for the **good balance of Shleshaka Kapha**. It contains shells of pearl oysters with a high content of **calcium**, extract of **giloy** (*Tinospora cordifolia*) and **amla** to calm the nerves.
- In order to keep our bones and joints healthy, we should avoid **excessive caffeine intake** and eat **highly acid foods**.
- From Ayurveda's point of view, the most appropriate method for relieving joint problems is **Abhyanga massage**. This type of massage is made with warm [natural herbal oils](#), such as sesame oil, **Mahanarayan oil** or **special Vata oil**. It relieves pain, acts soothing to the whole body, removes fatigue.
- Abhyangam helps to eliminate the damage to the whole organism caused by the dynamic way of life. It is believed that the **Abhyanga massage** aids the **lubricating fluid in the joints** and prolongs life and makes it complete. The massage involves movements on the various **meridians of the body** and **strengthens the bones of the body**. It has a significant impact not only on joint and waist pain but also on the nervous system.
- This type of massage is also believed to restore the **balance of the three types of Doshas Vata, Pitta and Kapha** and to have long lasting beneficial effects on the whole body, relax muscle tension, act favorably on the cardiovascular system, fight headaches, and recover physical tone and good looks and to have a soothing effect on the psyche.
- Regular Abhyanga massages remove stress, restore harmony between different body organs, help with exhaustion and depression, cleanse toxins from the body, nourish and regenerate all tissues, have a regenerating effect on skin cells and help in case of dry skin.
- Abhyanga is also recommended for problems with the digestive system, gas formation in the intestine and stomach, strengthens immunity. For maximum effect, several massages are recommended within 1-2 weeks. It is recommended that a hot compress with castor oil is used to locally affect the painful area of the joint.
- The other curative methods Ayurveda recommends besides Abhyanga massage is to follow everyday regimen (waking up and falling asleep at the same time) as well as regular **yoga exercises** involving a special series of movements to stir the joints like **Pavanmuktasana**. Meditation, deep breathing exercises like **Nadi Shodana** and **Pranayama are recommended to remove toxins from the body**.