Psoriatic Arthritis Pain Management Tips to Try Today

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6 Tips for Managing the Pain of Psoriatic Arthritis

If are currently living with psoriatic arthritis, you know it can be a painful condition. For some people, flare-ups are occasional, but for others the pain is constant.

Although management of psoriatic arthritis is multifaceted, relieving pain in the joints is key. Less pain promotes mobility, which can lead to overall better health. Continue reading for six psoriatic arthritis pain management tips to try.

1. Overhaul Your Diet

Weight loss will put less weight on your joints. There are also other tweaks that may promote less pain.

You should avoid foods that are known to cause inflammation, such as dairy, refined sugars and red meats. Foods known to reduce inflammation should be eaten in abundance, such as fatty fish, sweet potatoes, carrots, kale and blueberries.

Some people believe the Paleo diet helps with the symptoms of psoriatic arthritis. Research has not proven that this diet is effective; however, this diet is low in dairy and processed foods so it may be something to try. This diet is rich in protein, such as meat, fish and eggs, and also fruits and vegetables.

Research shows that 25 percent of people suffering with psoriatic arthritis are also sensitive to gluten. For these people, avoiding gluten can decrease pain and inflammation.

A Mediterranean diet high in omega-3s may reduce inflammation. A study performed in 2014 showed that psoriatic arthritis sufferers had less severe symptoms when following this diet, which is high in cold-water fish, whole grains, fruits and vegetables.

2. Physical Activity

Regular exercise keeps joints limber and keeps muscles strong. Although it may be difficult, especially if you are in pain, finding a type of exercise that is enjoyable and easy to do will make it more likely that you will continue a regular exercise routine.

Swimming, walking and biking are all low-impact exercises. Yoga is more than just physical activity; it is often prescribed as complementary therapy for all types of diseases and conditions, from back pain to metastatic breast cancer.

Following a yoga routine can decrease pain associated with psoriatic arthritis, and may also promote sleep and enhance mood.

3. Consider Alternative Therapies

Consider other therapies that have been found beneficial for arthritis pain, like acupuncture. Acupuncture is a procedure that has been used for thousands of years by millions of people, and is a safe and effective option for pain relief. For psoriatic arthritis it may work even better when combined with a healthy diet and NSAIDs, suggests the National Psoriasis Foundation.

4. Manage Stress

Practice psoriasis stress management. Stress is a well known trigger of arthritis pain, and stress also makes you more sensitive to pain. A study that evaluated the impact on meditation on people with psoriasis who were also receiving PUVA experienced more symptom improvement compared with those who did not practice meditation.

5. Make Use of Assistive Devices

Use assistive devices when needed. For example, use a jar opener rather than trying to open a difficult pickle jar, especially if you're having a hard time. Learn proper body mechanics for lifting boxes and other heavy objects.

Talk to your boss. Do you feel more pain at work? Talk to your manager about making your workplace more comfortable. An ergonomic chair and special devices for your desk or computer can be provided by your employer. Remember to also take short breaks to move and stretch a little bit during your working hours.

6. Pain-Relieving Medications

When all else fails, take medications when necessary. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen or naproxen are typically prescribed by doctors initially. These can be purchased over-the-counter, but watch for side effects, such as gastric upset.

Prescription Medications

- **Disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs):** These drugs slow the progression of psoriatic arthritis. DMARDs include methotrexate (Trexall), leflunomide (Arava) and sulfasalazine (Azulfidine). DMARDs can cause liver damage, bone marrow suppression and lung infections.
- **Immunosuppressants**: These drugs are not specific to psoriatic arthritis, but tame the immune system. Examples include azathioprine (Imuran) and cyclosporine (Sandimmune). The downside to these medications is they make you more susceptible to infections.
- **TNF-alpha inhibitors:** These drugs work specifically to reduce morning stiffness and pain in the joints associated with psoriatic arthritis. TNF-alpha inhibitors include etanercept (Enbrel) and infliximab (Remicade). These medications can cause nausea, hair loss, serious infections and diarrhea.