

Non-drug options for chronic pain

Pain that lasts a long time or is ongoing is called chronic pain. A variety of conditions may lead to chronic pain, including arthritis, fibromyalgia, past injuries, or migraine headaches.

Always speak to your doctor about any natural remedies you wish to try and any herbs or supplements you take. Not all natural treatments are safe for everyone, including if you are pregnant. Some can interact with medicines. Your doctor can help you find options that will be best for you. The following options are alternative, non-drug treatments that may be helpful.

ACUPUNCTURE

This Chinese medicine practice involves the placement of thin, small needles into the surface of the skin at various points on the body called meridians. Acupuncturists should be certified or licensed and should use sterile needles. Some studies suggest acupuncture may help with osteoarthritis pain, lower back pain and headaches.



MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is a type of meditation in which you focus on the present moment only. You calmly acknowledge feelings and thoughts that arise and go back to thinking about the present moment. This treatment may be helpful for people with chronic pain.

HERBS AND DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS

Various natural supplements may be helpful for chronic pain.

- Omega-3 fatty acids, gamma-linolenic acid (GLA) and the herb thunder god vine may help with rheumatoid arthritis pain.
- Butterbur, feverfew, magnesium, riboflavin and coenzyme Q10 may help prevent migraines.
- Vitamin D supplements may reduce pain in people with fibromyalgia who have low vitamin D levels.
- Devil's claw and white willow bark taken by mouth may be helpful for back pain.
- Cayenne, comfrey, Brazilian arnica and lavender essential oil may help back pain when used on the skin (do not take these by mouth).



MASSAGE

Massage therapists use their hands to rub or knead the muscles and joints of the body. Some studies show that massage therapy can help with neck pain. Massage may also help reduce pain from osteoarthritis.



Source: National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health