

Understanding Osteo-Arthritis:

Many patients come to me with the problem, which they call Arthritis. Generally what they mean is that they suffer pain associated with their bony structures, back or joints usually.

The first thing which I seek to determine is whether what they are experiencing is actually associated with changes to the structure itself which is to say changes in the bones. All such changes I classify as **Arthritic Processes**. There are a whole range of processes which don't primarily involve the bones themselves but rather the fluids which lubricate the joints which makes them primarily blood chemistry problems which I classify as **Rheumatic Processes**.

Osteo-Arthritis is a more exact description which clearly indicates that what we are dealing with are changes in the bones themselves which will show up in scans and X-rays.

By the time these people show up in my clinic they have generally accepted that their problems are somehow out of their control being due to injury or wear and tear or some genetic tendency inherited from their family.

The first thing I do therefore is to seek to explain that our structures (unlike our motor cars) are programmed to repair themselves as we go along. We arrived with a lifetime guarantee on our structures and if we follow the maintenance manual they will last our whole lives. The manual states that bones, unlike soft tissue, are largely composed of minerals and that a correct balance of these minerals must be on hand at all times to carry out routine maintenance and repair. The manual also specifies the correct lubricants and fuels and the loading limits for which your body was designed.

The best way to understand Osteo-Arthritis therefore is to first look at the processes within the body that initiated the changes which led to pain, restriction of movement and changes in the bones themselves.

Some of these processes are as follows;

- An overly acid constitution which seems to disturb the calcium/silica balance in the body leading to deposition of bone material in places where it is uncalled for. Osteo-Porosis can be seen as the opposite problem where bone mass is being eroded away from where it is needed.
- A diet too high in calcium altogether, which upsets also the calcium/silica, balance leading to the same problems. This is very common in the western dairy rich diets and is very much a man made problem.
- Bone damage and wear and tear through misuse or injury, which has not been allowed to repair itself effectively. Bones can produce scar tissue the same as flesh. Scarred bones can lose their elasticity and become brittle or the scarring itself can interfere with normal movement leading to problems.
- Bones are supported and articulated through muscles and ligaments. Habits resulting in unbalanced or unusual tension within these can place unnatural

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- loads on the bones themselves. In severe cases the bones respond by changing their shape to try to alleviate some of this tension.
- Some people are born with structural defects or have had accidents or work histories, which have placed unbalanced loads on their bones resulting in high wear on specific areas.
 - There are commonly prescribed modern drugs with side effects, which directly influence the health and strength of bones.

So you see the answer to the question "What can you do for my Osteo-Arthritis?" is not as simple as it might seem at first glance. The medical doctors answer might be; "Well lets see how you go on such and such an anti-inflammatory drug." The naturopathic practitioners answer is likely to be a whole lot more questions.

Online Consultation Service:

I encourage people to sign up for an online consultation if I cannot see them in person to try to identify which of or which combination of the above are involved in the particular case so I can prescribe for the person exactly and not just the named disease. Osteo-Arthritis is not a simple problem and every case is different. The reasons behind the differences are the critical factors in successful treatment. The link to my online consultation site is:

http://www.herbal-treatments.com.au/human_consultation.asp

Herbal Health Treatments Available:

There are however there are three major strategies involved in my treatment of the physical aspects of Osteo-Arthritis and I do have standardized herbal mixes which can be helpful as a first step.

Treating inflammation and pain using herbal combinations rather than drugs:

Devils Claw, White Willow Bark, Guaiacum and Burdock are four herbs, which I often use in mixes, aimed at reducing inflammation and pain. Each of them has different actions in the body and contains different ingredients. In combination they provide support for the stiff, sore early morning pain, the hot dry pain, the constant dull ache, the soreness after too much use and the sharp pain of severe inflammation any or all of which can be a feature of a particular case of Osteo-Arthritis.

When I use these basic ingredients I always support them with others which will assist the nervous system and the adrenals, both of which are depleted by pain and the frustration which accompanies ones restrictions on mobility. Valerian, Oats, Rosehips and Liquorice are often helpful, as are the Bach Flower remedies Vine, Rockwater and Rescue Remedy.

This approach to pain and inflammation management is superior to chemical anti-inflammatories as it is supporting the body in resolving inflammation and pain rather than simply masking it. Further, there are no detrimental side effects of this combination if used in the prescribed doses as there are with chemical anti-inflammatories which even in small doses can cause stomach ulceration and worse.

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My **Osteo-Arthritis Anti-Inflammatory Mix** contains these ingredients in 1:1 (the strongest available) extract combination and a 100ml bottle sufficient for 6 weeks treatment is \$41 and can be [ordered here](#).

Halting and reversing the physical processes of deterioration:

Treating and healing damaged bones has been a preoccupation of herbalists for thousands of years and some of the herbs are named specifically for this purpose. One of the common names for the herb Comfrey for example is "Knitbone" which precisely described the effect of a poultice containing Comfrey or Comfrey taken internally will have on a broken bone. It will assist it to heal much more rapidly than if left without support.

The particular combination I prescribe for healing bones contains Comfrey, Yarrow, Horsetail and Rosehips. The individual actions of this blend are as follows;

- Comfrey accelerates and supports healing of the bone itself.
- Yarrow supports the return of strength in the nervous system sense and enhances bone marrow health in support of rapid healing.
- Horsetail provides a source very high in organic Silica compounds to promote healthy flexible and resilient bones.
- Rosehips support the adrenals, kidneys and liver and provide an excellent source of iron and vitamin C.

On its own this combination should almost immediately arrest the process of deterioration and begin to turn the process around and set in motion healing.

I always explain to my patients that all cells in the body are replaced at regular intervals, even the cells making up the bones themselves. Therefore with the correct healing ingredient and support this renewal process can occur with better cells than worse ones just as easily. A six week course of **Bone Healing Tonic** costs \$41 and it may be ordered by [clicking here](#).

Working on aspects of the immune system where the problems originated:

All changes in the body, which result in abnormal cell growth, or incomplete tissue repair or replacement can be seen as a breakdown of the immune system.

I describe the immunity as consisting of two levels. The upper levels of the immune system are where your body identifies foreign agents and defends you against external attack. Fighting off the common cold is such an activity. The lower levels of the immune system are where your defenses against internal attack occur. Cancer can only develop for example when the immunity breaks down and is unable to control the proliferation of random cells within the body.

Whenever the normal pattern of maintenance and repair within the body change and allow the acceleration of aging processes or abnormal changes in tissues we need to support the immune system at the lower levels. Antioxidants provide such support and are a feature of all my auto-immune treatments.

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- Vitamins, especially C and E are antioxidants.
- Fresh foods of all sorts are high in antioxidants.
- Rosehips tea is particularly high.
- An extract from the sapwood and bark of the Maritime Pine are 25 times higher than Vitamin C, making it the most powerful antioxidant available.

A 12 week course of **Maritime Pine Antioxidant** costs \$38.50 and it may be ordered by [clicking here](#)

The role of attitude, tension and posture, which are always involved in Osteo-Arthritis.

Whenever I think of skeletal health I always think of those lovely graceful Asian and African women one sees in documentary programs, carrying loads on their heads.

These ladies have very different lives from us;

- They sit cross-legged on the floor rather than on chairs.
- They happily spend hours each day squatting or bent over at the waist working to prepare food or in their gardens.
- They walk everywhere, mostly without shoes on.
- They have little or no dairy products in their diet.
- Their diet is high in grains and fresh vegetables in season, little fat and meat.
- They live in extended families and have strong peer group support.
- They are secure in their role in life and revered for their wisdom as they age.
- They sing and dance and laugh often.
- They have amazing grace and posture.

Carrying a load on your head involves a direct vertical load on the whole structure. If you carried your head forward or were stooped or sway backed, you couldn't do it. If you had any sort of lateral curvature in your spine, you couldn't do it. If you walked on your heels or shuffled your feet or wore high-heeled shoes, you couldn't do it.

Carrying a load on your head therefore forces your posture to be perfectly balanced and causes all parts of your structure to bear the weight evenly. It also leaves your hands free.

If you spend most of your time sitting in cars, in chairs or at desks. If you are not fit or don't walk or you carry mostly one sided loads. If you spend too much time maintaining the same position and making repetitive motions. If you feel constantly under pressure and physically or emotionally tense much of the time. If your attitudes are fixed, you feel isolated and find little joy or support in your life.

It should not be surprising to find your structure changing in response and becoming stiff and rigid.

Balance is the key. Changing what you put in your mouth may help a little especially if it corrects some of the more gross nutritional imbalances but it is not the whole answer.

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Self examination, recreation, flexibility in attitudes and exercise are all equally important.

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October 2001