

Six Simple Steps to ease arthritis and joint pain



Joint pain and arthritis can make everyday activities challenging and uncomfortable. But you have the power to reduce inflammation and ease your symptoms naturally. The great news? Simple, everyday food choices can make a real difference to pain, stiffness and mobility.

===== Quick Wins =====

Eat a handful of berries every day - rich in compounds that fight inflammation

Have oily fish twice weekly - omega-3 fats reduce joint pain and stiffness

Eat the rainbow daily - different coloured fruits and veg fight inflammation in different ways

Add cruciferous veg 3-4 times weekly - broccoli, cauliflower and kale contain special compounds that protect joints

Snack on walnuts daily - one of the best nuts for reducing inflammation

Start your day with a chia pudding - high in vegan omega 3, fibre and anti-inflammatory polyphenols

WARNING: THESE QUICK WINS WORK BEST WHEN PROCESSED AND RED MEATS, FRIED FOODS, WHITE CARBS AND ALCOHOL ARE KEPT TO A MINIMUM!

Modern medicine is amazing. It can save lives and help us feel better. But when it comes to joint pain and arthritis, pills only control the problem - they don't fix what's causing it. This is where food comes in. The right foods can actually reduce inflammation in your body and protect your joints from further damage. Food works differently to medicine - it tackles the root cause, not just the symptoms.

Change can be hard - especially big changes. For most of us it's easier to make lots of small changes, one at a time. Working through these tips will help new healthy habits stick - giving you better health today and for the rest of your life.

This guide helps you take small steps towards reducing joint pain naturally, often within weeks. You don't need fancy supplements or extreme diets - just real, whole foods and a few smart swaps. When it comes to your joints, leaving 'painful' inflammatory foods behind is just as important as eating more of the good stuff.

Every healthy choice you make is like a small gift to your future self.

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1.

EAT MORE OILY FISH

Why it works: Oily fish contains omega-3 fats (EPA and DHA) that are powerful anti-inflammatories. Eating oily fish regularly reduces joint pain, morning stiffness and can even reduce need for pain medication. It's one of the best things you can do for your joints.

What to do:

- Aim for 2 portions of oily fish per week
- Best choices: salmon, mackerel, sardines, herring, fresh tuna
- Tinned fish counts and is very cheap
- A portion is about the size of your hand

Ways to eat more:

- Grilled salmon or mackerel with veg
- Tinned sardines on wholemeal toast
- Tuna or salmon wholemeal sandwich
- Mackerel or anchovies in salad
- Tinned tuna or salmon on jacket potato
- Mackerel makes an awesome curry

TOP TIP: If you are not keen on the flavours of oily fish **try a fish oil supplement**. They are cheap, flavourless and you can even get vegan varieties made from algal oil.

Make it easy:

- Keep tinned/canned fish in your cupboard for quick meals - affordable, convenient and lasts ages - mackerel, sardines, tuna and salmon all work.
- Frozen fish is cheaper and often fresher
- Start with one fish meal per week, build to two
- Sardines on toast is cheapest and easiest
- Smoked mackerel is affordable, keeps well and makes a great pate



Eating more oily fish is one of the best things you can do for your joints.

2.

BRING OUT THE BERRIES

Why it works: Berries are packed with anthocyanins - special compounds that reduce inflammation and protect joints. Studies show people who eat berries regularly have less joint pain and inflammation. They're one of the most powerful anti-inflammatory foods you can eat.

What to do:

- Aim for a handful of berries daily
- Any berries work: blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, cherries
- Fresh or frozen both work - frozen are often cheaper and can be more nutritious
- Tart cherry juice is especially good for joint pain (small glass daily)
- Toss some into a salad

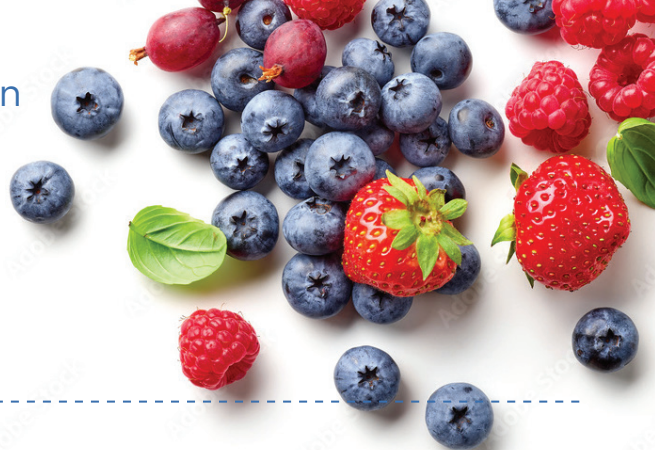
Simple swaps:

- Biscuits or sweets ➔ Handful of fresh berries or dried berries with nuts
- Sugary dessert ➔ Berries with Greek yoghurt
- Morning pastry or toast ➔ Porridge or chia pudding with berries
- Plain cereal ➔ Cereal with berries on top
- Ice cream ➔ Frozen berries with yoghurt

TOP TIP: Mix some **chia seeds with frozen or fresh raspberries** for a healthy anti-inflammatory alternative to jam - add a drizzle of honey if you need a little more sweetness.

Make it easy:

- Buy frozen berries - cheaper and last ages
- Make frozen berries into smoothies with nut butter, banana and yoghurt
- Keep a bag in freezer ready to add to meals
- Grow your own or pick blackberries in autumn
- Add berries to your breakfast routine
- Try with chia pudding for a simple anti-inflammatory breakfast



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Chia puddings need no cooking and can be made the night before for a quick breakfast. Cheap, fun, delicious and powerfully anti-inflammatory - especially when topped with nuts, seeds and berries.

3.

SNACK ON NUTS & SEEDS

Why it works: Certain nuts and seeds are packed with omega-3 fats and anti-inflammatory compounds. Studies show eating these regularly reduces inflammation and can ease joint pain. Walnuts are the champion for omega-3 but chia seeds, flax seeds and almonds also provide anti-inflammatory benefits. They're a simple daily habit that protects your joints.

What to do:

- Eat a small handful of nuts daily (about 30g) and add seeds to meals (1-2 tablespoons).
- Always choose unsalted nuts.
- The best choices for joint health are walnuts (highest omega-3 content), then chia seeds, ground flax seeds, hemp seeds, almonds, pumpkin seeds, and sunflower seeds.
- Add them to porridge, cereal, salads, yogurt, or smoothies.
- Eat nuts as snacks with apple slices or mixed with dried fruit.

TOP TIP: Toast some nuts and seeds in big batches, season with spices and keep them in a 'snacking jar' where they are easy to see and reach.

Simple Swaps:

- Crisps ➡ handful of walnuts or flax crackers
- Biscuits ➡ walnuts/almonds with a fruit
- Toast with jam or marmalade ➡ wholemeal toast with walnut or almond butter
- Salted nuts ➡ unsalted nuts
- Cheese or croutons on salads / soups ➡ crushed walnuts or pumpkin seeds
- Plain porridge ➡ porridge with chia, milled flax, walnuts and pumpkin seeds

Make it easy:

- Buy a large bags of nuts and portion into small containers for the week.
- Keep a pot of mixed nuts at work, in your bag, or in the car for convenient snacking.
- Buy milled flax seeds (or grind your own) and keep them by breakfast cereals.
- If you are in a hurry in the morning - make chia pudding the night before and take it to work.
- Add nuts or seeds to your morning routine as part of breakfast.
- Keep big jars of nut butters in the cupboards and eat with celery, crackers or wholemeal toast for easy snacks

4.

EAT THE RAINBOW

Why it works: Different coloured fruits and vegetables contain different compounds that fight inflammation. Eating a rainbow of colours means you get the full range of protection for your joints. The more colours you eat, the less inflammation in your body. Studies show people who eat more colourful veg have less arthritis pain.

What to do:

- Aim to eat at least five different colours daily
- Each colour provides different benefits for your joints
- Fill half your plate with colourful veg at lunch and dinner
- Add mixed peppers to pasta dishes
- Mix different coloured veg in stir-fries
- Make colourful salads with different veg
- Roast different coloured veg together

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Red: Tomatoes, red peppers, strawberries, cherries, pomegranate, radish

Orange/Yellow: Carrots, sweet potatoes, oranges, peppers, squash, pumpkin

Green: Spinach, kale, broccoli, green beans, peas, cabbage, soy beans

Blue/Purple: Blueberries, blackberries, red cabbage, aubergine

White/Brown: Onions, garlic, leeks, mushrooms, cauliflower, whole grains

TOP TIP: If your plate looks beige or brown, it's missing anti-inflammatory power. Aim for at least 3 different colours at every meal. The more colourful your plate, the less inflammation in your body.

Each colour brings a different health benefit

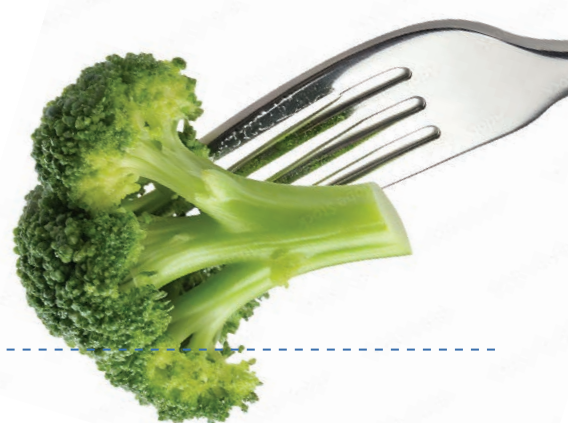


Simple Swaps:

- Beige plate ➔ Colourful plate
- Pasta with tomato sauce ➔ Pasta with tomatoes, peppers, spinach and mushrooms
- Side of chips ➔ Side of mixed roasted veg or sweet potato chips
- Plain sandwich ➔ Sandwich packed with colourful salad

Make it easy:

- Keep frozen mixed veg - instant rainbow
- Add frozen mixed berries to porridge
- Shop with your eyes and try a new colour fruit and veg each time you visit the supermarket
- Buy different coloured peppers and roast together - throw in aubergine, courgette, sweet potato, tomatoes or broccoli for even more colour
- Challenge yourself - how many colours can you eat today? Can you do more tomorrow
- Take a photo of your plate - is it colourful?



5.

ADD CRUCIFEROUS VEG

Why it works: Broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, kale and cabbage contain a special compound called sulforaphane that reduces inflammation and may slow joint damage. Studies show people who eat these vegetables regularly have less arthritis pain. They're like a natural medicine for your joints.

What to do:

- Eat cruciferous veg 3-4 times per week
- Try more broccoli (easiest and most powerful), Cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, kale, cabbage - white, red, savoy, hispi
- Steamed broccoli as a side
- Roasted cauliflower or savoy cabbage
- Brussels sprouts roasted with olive oil
- Kale or spring greens in soups and stews
- Cabbage in coleslaw or stir-fries

TOP TIP: Don't overcook these veg or you lose the anti-inflammatory power. Steam or lightly roast until just tender but still bright green. Overcooked grey broccoli has lost its benefits.

Simple Swaps:

- White rice ➔ Cauliflower rice
- Lettuce in salad ➔ Kale or shredded cabbage
- Pasta with cheese sauce ➔ broccoli and/or Cauliflower cheese
- Pickles ➔ Sauerkraut

Make it easy:

- Buy frozen broccoli and cauliflower - cheap and ready to use
- Roast a big tray at weekend to add to meals all week. Try roasting cauliflower steaks or whole hispi cabbage
- Buy a tub of coleslaw - or make a batch of your own - keep in the fridge for salads and sides
- Add to soups, stews, curries and pasta dishes
- Start with broccoli - easiest to cook and eat. Steams in 3 minutes for a quick side dish

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6.

SPICE UP YOUR LIFE

Why it works: Spices have been used for centuries as powerful anti-inflammatory compounds that can reduce joint pain and stiffness. Using spices such as ginger, turmeric, garlic, cinnamon and daily gives your joints natural protection. Adding your own spices to home cooking is a double win as this means less processed and take away food.

What to do:

- Add turmeric, ginger, garlic and cinnamon to curries, soups and stews for maximum anti-inflammatory power
- Grate fresh ginger and add crushed garlic to stir-fries and pasta dishes
- Sprinkle turmeric on roasted vegetables
- Mix turmeric, ginger or cinnamon into smoothies
- Mix cinnamon into Greek yoghurt
- Use fresh ginger or garlic in salad dressings
- Drink golden milk - turmeric latte
- Use fresh crushed garlic wherever possible - it's more powerful than dried


TOP TIP: For turmeric to work better, always add black pepper. The compound in black pepper helps your body absorb turmeric's anti-inflammatory power. Always use them together.

Simple Swaps:

- Plain rice ➔ Rice with turmeric
- Plain scrambled eggs ➔ Eggs with turmeric and black pepper
- Regular tea ➔ Ginger tea
- Plain stir-fry ➔ Stir-fry with fresh ginger and garlic
- Plain porridge ➔ Porridge with cinnamon

Make it easy:

- Buy ground turmeric and cinnamon - keep by your cooker
- Buy fresh ginger - keeps for weeks in fridge
- Keep fresh garlic bulbs in kitchen - use daily
- Start by adding one spice to one meal per day
- Add a pinch of turmeric and cinnamon to your morning porridge



Ginger tea or turmeric latte are great swaps to help reduce joint pain.

LIMITING INFLAMMATORY FOODS

- Sugar is the worst offender** - too much in your blood can literally act like sandpaper in your joints making pain and inflammation worse.
- Processed and red meats** (bacon, sausages, ham, beef, pork) - increase inflammation
- Fried foods and takeaways** - high in inflammatory fats
- White bread, white rice, white pasta** - swap for wholegrain versions
- Excessive alcohol** - can increase inflammation

MUSCLES ARE MEDICINE!

Eating a healthy, anti-inflammatory diet can make a big difference to your joint pain and arthritis. If you can add strength training into the mix, the effect is even better. Building muscles, especially around aching joints, can help take some pressure off and relieve the pain. Good food and regular exercise are powerful ways to influence both how well you live and how long you live.

YOUR SUCCESS TIPS

Start small: Master one step before moving to the next. Even one change makes a difference!

Make it visible: Print this out and stick it on your fridge as a daily reminder.

Tell someone: Share your plan with family or a friend. Support helps!

Slip-ups are normal: Missed a day? No worries. Just start again tomorrow. It's about progress, not perfection.

Be patient: Blood pressure changes take 1-2 weeks to show. Stick with it!

Celebrate wins: Managed all 6 steps for a week? That's fantastic - treat yourself (but maybe not to a high salt or sugary snack!)

REMEMBER

Your joints respond to every positive change - even small steps, made daily, can have big impacts: Start today, keep going, and your future self will thank you. **It's not all or nothing. It's all or something.**

For further advice and support visit:
pioneermedicalgroup.nhs.uk/patient-support-and-information/self-care/nutrition