

[IMAGE]

Take Care of Your Joints

By Julie T. Chen, MD

Many of my patients in my integrative clinic in San Jose, CA come to see me regarding their joint aches and pains. If it's not the joint itself then it's the tendons and soft tissue around the joint that is bothering them. If you think about it, these little joints keep us active and functional. They go through a lot on a daily basis just to keep us up and about. So, don't you think they need a lot of TLC every once in a while? How about every day and not just once in a while?

I'm going to help you with some key tips on keeping your joints happy and healthy.

First, if you know that a certain activity or repetitive motion is causing a certain joint to ache and scream, then you should refrain from that activity. If you cannot refrain from that activity because it's a part of your work, you need to make sure you get some braces or durable medical equipment that can help support that joint. You should also get some physical therapy sessions in to help strengthen the muscles around that joint so that you can take the pressure and responsibility off that joint. Stronger muscles around the joint help to support it and thus there's less strain on the joint.

Second, many of my patients notice great improvement in joint health and less pain when they remove food allergies or sensitivities from their diet. The reason for that is that if you certain foods trigger inflammation in the body, that inflammation may adversely affect your already irritated joint. So, ask your doctor about food allergy and sensitivity testing and if you find that you do indeed have some, make sure to avoid those sensitivities all the time to keep your joints and you aging healthily.

joint health - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Finally, your diet and sleep are very important in helping your body heal and repair itself. So, you need to make sure you are eating a mostly anti-inflammatory diet full of nuts, legumes, vegetables, low saturated fat proteins, healthy fats like in olive oil and avocados, and whole grains. You need to remove processed foods that have chemicals and pesticides or hormones from your diet. You also need to stay hydrated with water and antioxidant-rich organic teas. If you feed your body what it needs to repair and heal your body and then you make sure that you get 7-8 hours of sleep every night, your body should have all that it needs to undo the damage of daily

life on your joints and body.

and how some don't. Even in my clinic, I frequently see patients who look and function younger than their age, while others seem older than their age. If you look at epidemiological studies and even if you just looked at examples of people in your life or for me, in my clinic, those who manage stress well, make it a priority to get enough sleep, and eat a well-balanced mostly plant-based anti-inflammatory diet usually age extremely well.

So, whether you want to make sure that your joints, skin, body, or mind age well, just make sure that you are sleeping, making sure that you are happy and managing your stress, and eating as Mother Nature intended you to. If you do all that, you'll be one of those people that leave others wondering what your true age is, because your glowing health will make it hard to tell.

Dr. Julie T. Chen is board-certified in internal medicine and fellowship-trained and board-certified in integrative medicine. She has her own medical practice in San Jose, Calif. She is the medical director of corporation wellness at several Silicon Valley-based corporations, is on several medical expert panels of Web sites and nonprofit organizations, is a recurring monthly columnist for several national magazines, and has been featured in radio, newspaper, and magazine interviews. She incorporates various healing modalities into her practice including, but is not limited to, medical acupuncture, Chinese scalp acupuncture, clinical hypnotherapy, strain-counterstrain osteopathic manipulations, and biofeedback. To learn more, visit www.makinghealthyez.com.

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