



Buzz, Body & Bites

A newsletter for actively aging adults
Virginia Cooperative Extension Family & Consumer Sciences
July 2022

Foods in the Mediterranean Diet That Fight Inflammation of Arthritis

Fish

- How much: 3-4 oz twice a week
- Sources: Salmon, tuna, sardines, herring, anchovies, scallops and other cold-water fish

Nuts

- How much: 1.5 ounces a day
- Sources: Walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios and almonds

Healthy Oils

- How much: 2-3 tablespoons daily
- Sources: Extra virgin olive oil, walnut oil, safflower & avocado oil Fruits & vegetables

How much: 9 servings daily

Sources: Colorful fruits and veggies — the darker or more brilliant the color, the more antioxidants

Beans/Legumes

How much: 1 cup, twice a week

Sources: Small red beans, red kidney beans, pinto beans

Whole grains

How much: 3 ounces daily

Sources: Oatmeal, brown rice, quinoa, whole grain cereal/bread

Arthritis Awareness Month: Physical Activity Is Essential

When I'm really tired at the end of the day, an evening stroll with my husband and dog feels like an insurmountable chore rather than a joyful activity that can fuel my body for the rest of the evening, help me sleep better, improve my mood, and reduce my risk for arthritis. But, as a physical activity researcher, I know that moving my body has physical and mental benefits that are almost too various to name. Arthritis prevention and management is just one of the many benefits.

Those with or at risk for arthritis, not only feel physical pain from the swelling of joints but also reduced quality of life from things like a lack of sleep and feelings of helplessness and tension (back to the interrelatedness of physical and mental health benefits of physical activity).

Joints are where bones meet—or in Old English—where bones are “joint together” (hence the name!). The top of joints have a slippery layer called cartilage, which helps keep the bone from grinding and wearing down.

There are two main types of arthritis: Osteoarthritis is when that cartilage layer starts to break down. Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune system disease that starts in the lining of joints.

When joints feel swollen, warm, worn and generally achy—movement might seem daunting, but is one of your defenses against the development, progression, or worsening of arthritis symptoms.

A few things to consider:

- Any movement counts. Gardening, making a meal, walking while bird watching. Start slow, but keep moving.
- It may be best to speak with a medical provider before starting any new routines.

You can try this:

From a seated position, lift your knee into your chest (on center). Bring your knee to the side. Come back through center, with leg still lifted, rotate at the ankle clockwise and counter clockwise. Repeat on the other leg. You’ve just activated your ankle, knee, and hip joints!

Another to try:

With loose fingers (i.e. no tension), rotate your wrists clockwise and counterclockwise. Now, grip your fingers, like you are making a claw, and repeat the rotations at the wrists, winding clockwise and counterclockwise. Notice a difference?

One final note: Just as joint is to joining together, one of the best ways to be active is with someone else—this helps with social health as well, especially for older adults. Keep moving, your joints will thank you for it!

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Banana Berry Smoothie

Mashed red cherries, blackberries, and Greek yogurt make for a healthy, low-sugar treat. Berries are rich in phytochemicals like anthocyanins and ellagic acid, that are antioxidants and reduce inflammation.

A fruit smoothie is perfect for a yummy breakfast on the go. It’s also a great way to include fruits like berries that are high in anti-inflammatory nutrients in your diet.

Source: eatSMARTmoveMoreVA.org/recipes/banana-berry-smoothie

Ingredients:

- 2 bananas, sliced
- 1 cup frozen or fresh berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, etc.)
- 1 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt
- 3/4 cup 1% milk
- 1/2 cup ice, optional

Instructions:

Makes 4 servings

1. In a blender, combine bananas, berries, yogurt, and milk. Blend until smooth.
2. For a thicker smoothie, use frozen fruit, or add ice and blend until smooth.

Flexibility Exercises for Arthritis

Flexibility is the unrestricted movement of joints, or series of joints, in a pain-free motion. To ensure a healthy structure, joints need to be moved in full range of motion.

Inflexibility can cause injury due to muscle tension, so adding a stretching routine to your normal physical activity can prove very beneficial. Activities like yoga, dance, tai chi, or any stretching routine that is 20 minutes or longer has extensive benefits.

It is advised to maintain each stretch position for 30 seconds and work up to 1-2 minutes. Many different stretches can be performed for all areas of the body.

We will be giving examples of stretching exercises in our upcoming issues. It is important to note, it takes time and dedication to gain flexibility, so be patient and acknowledge your progress.

Resources:

Arthritis Foundation

www.arthritis.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/arthritis

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