

CHAPTER 8

Samhain



MUSCLES AND JOINTS

🌿 ROSEHIPS 🌿 HORSETAIL 🌿 NETTLES 🌿 FEVERFEW 🌿 WHITE
 WILLOW 🌿 GINGER 🌿 TURMERIC 🌿 DEVIL'S CLAW 🌿 FIGWORT
 🌿 GROUND ELDER 🌿 DANDELION LEAF 🌿 RUE 🌿 LAWN DAISY

The pain of arthritis is caused by inflammation, but it is the underlying cause of the inflammation where we should focus our attention. In the case of osteoarthritis, it is the eroding of the cartilage through wear and tear which results in bone rubbing on bone. With rheumatoid arthritis, it is the immune system attacking the joint membranes. With gout, the inflammation is caused by uric acid crystals irritating the joint membranes resulting in acute and excruciating pain, and pseudo gout is a similar condition caused by calcium crystal formation.

Do not despair – there is a lot that can be done to significantly slow down the progression, and even to backtrack a little.

OSTEOARTHRITIS

This is the type of arthritis that we all get after a certain age! It is simply the cartilage of our joints wearing out, and tends to affect the larger joints such as the knees, hips and neck. One of the most helpful things you can do for this arthritis is to lose weight (if you need to), that way reducing the burden on the joints.

To slow the progression of osteoarthritis you need to repair the cartilage as much as is realistically possible, reduce the inflammation and clear the toxic crystals from the joints, and strengthen the muscles surrounding the joint, so that they hold the limb in its correct position. There are several home remedies which can help.

REPAIR THE CARTILAGE

Repairing the cartilage requires collagen, which can be acquired through bone broth. There are umpteen recipes on the internet to follow, so I shall leave that for you to explore. Bone broth in your food is healthy for all your tissues. It may be useful to add fresh ginger and



turmeric as they are natural anti-inflammatories. Although turmeric is well known as an anti-inflammatory kitchen spice, it is also well known that curcumin, the active constituent, is difficult to absorb, and the absorption is facilitated by adding piperidine, found in black pepper. It is a simple matter of grating fresh turmeric into your bone broth and a hefty grind of black pepper to facilitate the absorption of the curcumin.

Gelatine

As a simpler though perhaps less tasty option, it is useful to have a teaspoonful of gelatine every day. Gelatine is collagen, and has been used for aeons to supplement our own collagen, and thereby plump out skin wrinkles, strengthen hair and brittle nails, heal the gut lining and support cartilage regeneration.

A teaspoon of gelatine each day can help to slowly rebuild your joint cartilage. Gelatine can be added to stocks and soups, but the simplest way is to dissolve a teaspoon in a cup of boiling water, and add Marmite or Bovril for a savoury drink. You can also add it to your morning cup of tea, where you can't even taste it. Do make sure that you completely dissolve it, because if you try to lick it off the spoon, you will find your lips and tongue glued together – which clearly illustrates that collagen is the glue which holds our tissues together. Indeed, the word collagen comes from the Greek word "*kolla*", which means glue.

The synthesis of collagen requires vitamin C, thus rosehips, rich in vitamin C, work very well together with gelatine. If you prefer to take a vitamin C supplement, then 1g will help to enhance the quality of your skin, hair and nails, as well as boosting your immune system and cartilage repair.

Other daily supplements which help to preserve and even rebuild cartilage include:

-  Glucosamine sulphate 1,500mg
-  MSM 1,500mg
-  Chondroitin 1,000mg

Rosehips (*Rosa canina*)

Rosehips are abundantly available to be harvested on your autumnal walks along the hedgerows and other lovely unruly places. These berries were highly sought after during the war when children were sent out to collect them so that they could be turned into a syrup rich in vitamin C. You may question how much vitamin C survived after the cooking process, but apparently the vitamin C content barely dropped following the syrup-making. It is the exposure to oxygen which reduces the vitamin C content, so once chopped, work quickly.

The immune-boosting vitamin content is a nice side effect of taking these berries, but it is their anti-inflammatory, antioxidant and pain-reducing action that we are after in the case of arthritis. In 2008 a study found that rosehips were three times more effective than paracetamol and 40 per cent more effective than glucosamine.⁶⁶

Incredibly, rosehips have been noted to have anti-diabetic and anti-obesity effects, which is precisely what is needed if we are trying to treat a weight-bearing arthritis. The wisdom of nature continues to astound me!

ROSEHIP VINEGAR

I prefer to use rosehips in apple cider vinegar, partly to avoid the sugar in a syrup, and partly because apple cider vinegar is so good for you anyway.

🍃 Collect the red rosehips, rinse off, then dry. Place them in your blender. Warm (but don't overheat) the apple cider vinegar, and pour over the rosehips, then whizz until they are roughly chopped.

🍃 Pour the whole lot into a glass Kilner jar and leave to macerate for 2 weeks.

🍃 When you are ready, you must carefully strain the hips 3 times through fine muslin so that all the irritating little hairs are removed from your rosehip vinegar.

🍃 Now you can take 2 tablespoons a day in a little water as a fabulous winter tonic.