

How to reduce persistent bone and muscle pain

Persistent joint, bone and muscle pain can affect a person's quality of life, as well as their mood.

Follow the prescribed drug treatment recommended by your family doctor.

What else can you do?

To help reduce pain and disability and reduce your need for medication, you can **improve your diet and exercise more, as well as managing your mood and getting enough rest. You should also avoid smoking.**

Diet

It is **recommended** that you follow a **Mediterranean diet** and eat **foods rich in polyphenols.**

- **Eat five portions daily of fruit and vegetables**, such as grapes, strawberries, raspberries, pomegranates, avocados, blueberries, beetroot, broccoli, cabbage, aubergines, tomatoes, onions, garlic and peppers.



- Also eat natural whole grains, virgin olive oil, yoghurt, kefir, nuts, seeds and cocoa.
- **Eat four portions of fish or legumes** (lentils, beans, peas, soybeans, etc.) per week.
- **Eat foods that are rich in omega-3**, such as oily fish, walnuts, sesame seeds, chia seeds and flax seeds.

Reduce

- Animal-based foods: white meat, eggs and fresh cheese (up to two portions per week); red meat (up to one portion per week).
- Avoid sugars, fats and processed foods.

Drink plenty of water, as dehydration can increase sensitivity to pain.

Avoid

- Being **overweight**, as this affects pain levels. Don't eat too many calories, but don't skip meals or snack between meals either.
- Avoid **vitamin D deficiency** by getting a few minutes of sun every day and avoiding skimmed products. Avoid **vitamin B12 deficiency** by eating meat, fish, eggs, seafood, and dairy products.

Avoid mineral deficiencies, such as **magnesium deficiency**, by eating green leafy vegetables, fruits, nuts, legumes, and cocoa.

- Cook food **for the shortest possible time** to prevent nutrient loss.

If you have **osteoarthritis of the knee**, **turmeric** and **ginger** can help to reduce pain and stiffness.

Physical exercise

Exercise helps to reduce pain and disability, increase agility, reduce body fat and **improve mood.**

Do daily physical activities that are adapted to your age, any illnesses you may have, your mobility and your preferences. You could go for a walk, cycle, swim, do aqua aerobics, yoga or tai chi, or do some muscle stretching.



Improve your mood!

Do enjoyable activities. **Think positively** and control negative thoughts.

Practise **meditation** and **relaxation**, and maintain your social and family relationships.



Get enough rest

Do moderate exercise, preferably in the morning. Follow a stable sleep schedule with a relaxed bedtime routine. Keep your bedroom quiet, dark and free of screens. Only use your bed for sleeping. Go to bed when you feel sleepy, but don't stay in bed once you're awake.

Avoid long naps. Avoid stimulants such as coffee, tea, chocolate and cola drinks, as well as alcohol, tobacco, heavy dinners, intense exercise and stressful activities in the hours before going to sleep.

Relax before going to bed.

Give up smoking

Quitting smoking can help to reduce chronic back pain, fibromyalgia and severe headaches.