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Soothe Your Sore Spot

For the most part, working out makes us feel exhilarated, but sometimes a tough session can lead to tight muscles or achy joints. To help you tame tension the natural way, we called on Jesse Cannone, CPT, author of The 7-Day Back Pain Cure (Bush Street Press, 2011) and co-founder of The Healthy Back Institute in Burlington, VT. Cannone's study, published in the Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, showed that nearly 71 percent of chronic pain patients he treated with homeopathic pain remedies felt better for the long-term—and with no harmful side effects. Here are the remedies, available at your local vitamin shop, that Cannone found worked best for the different areas of the body. As always, consult with your physician before adding any new supplement to your diet.

HEAD, NECK AND SHOULDERS: IGNATIA

Discovered by a Jesuit missionary serving in the Philippines in the late 1600s, this plant has been found to calm nerves and reduce the stress that can lead to a tight upper body and tension headaches. You'll find it in pill form in stores.

KNEES, ELBOWS AND WRISTS: CETYL MYRISTOLEATE (CMO)

"CMO acts as a moisturizer on dry and brittle joints, cushioning the joints and repairing cell membranes," says Cannone. "Some researchers have been so impressed with CMO they say it may be an alternative to the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs for treatment of osteoarthritis." Cannone says researchers at the University of Connecticut have used CMO to alleviate pain in 100 percent of their patients with joint and muscle pain in one or both knees, and a double-blind study at the Joint European Studies Program confirms these findings, revealing that subjects who took CMO experienced up to 87 percent improvement in pain relief. In addition, The Journal of Rheumatology reported on a double-blind study of patients with chronic knee osteoarthritis where the CMO group saw significant improvement while the placebo group saw none. CMO is available in capsule form.

BACK: RHUS TOX

"Rhus Tox, another ancient natural pain remedy, helps to eliminate stiffness and aches caused by inflammation in both muscles and joints," says Cannone. "It's good for sprains and back aches, too." Rhus Tox comes in both tablet and pellet forms.

LEGS, ANKLES AND FEET: BELLADONNA

For centuries, healers have used the Belladonna plant as a powerful anesthetic for surgeries, since it helps to reduce swelling, eliminate muscle twitches (hello, calf cramps!), relieve nerve pain, soothe muscle aches and stop shooting pains. As a bonus, it also helps relieve nasal congestion, perfect for allergy season. Belladonna retails as both pellets and tablets.

ALL-OVER RELIEF: MENTHOL

"Menthol is an ancient herbal pain-relief medicine used by the Greeks, Romans and Egyptians to rapidly cool painful flare-ups in muscles and tendons," says Cannone. As a stick, spray or body lotion, menthol tricks the body by sending a cooling, pleasing sensation to your brain that thwarts the stinging heat of inflammation.

—Carrie Stevens

KISS MY FACE LAVENDER MANDARIN PEACE SOAP kills germs on 101 surfaces, from your hands to your dishes to your Pilates mat! Ten percent of the profits are donated to Seeds of Peace, an organization that works to foster teenage leaders ($8.99 per 17 fluid ounces; www.kissmyface.com).

Concentrated, USDA certified organic VERMONT SOAP NATURAL PINE FLOOR CLEANER works wonders on wood floors, thanks to a combination of pine, coconut, olive and jojoba oils, aloe vera and rosemary extract ($9.98 per 16 fluid ounces; www.vermontsoap.com).

THE HONEST CO. HONEST BATHROOM CLEANER IN EUCALYPTUS MINT, formulated with tea tree oil, gets out tough stains on tubs, tiles, counters and more ($7.95 per 24 fluid ounces; www.honest.com).

—Amanda Altman