



FEATURE ARTICLE FROM Always Best Care

Natural Approaches for Managing Pain

Many associate aches and pains as a natural part of getting older; however, this doesn't have to be the case. Being proactive and taking good care of one's body can help reduce chronic pain and risk of injury. September is Pain Awareness Month and a valuable reminder for seniors to speak up if they are experiencing pain to identify problems early on. Open and honest communication can help seniors, their caregivers, and their healthcare providers to be more proactive in reducing pain and enhancing quality of life.

A great way to stay on top of pain is to **remain active**. Exercises don't have to be strenuous to be effective. Yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi, walking, swimming, and biking all help to keep muscles moving and build strength and flexibility. These are wonderful activities to do with friends to help with safety and motivation. Physical therapy and regular exercise can be an excellent source of pain relief and enhance the body's natural production of endorphins.

Another component is to **watch what you eat**. Certain foods can trigger inflammation while others reduce it. Know your body and how it responds to specific foods. Foods that are high in omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin C, and flavonoids can be beneficial. Adding spices such as ginger, turmeric, and chili powder can add flavor while also decreasing inflammation as well. Some foods to consider include fish, blueberries, raspberries, black beans, tomatoes, dark leafy vegetables, and green tea. A healthy diet can also help with weight management, another factor in managing pain.

Practicing meditation can clear the mind and support pain management. It allows seniors to focus on the mind-body connection and deep breathing. Though this may not seem like much, many people find that it helps them to overcome pain and keep a more positive attitude. Being able to relax the body and mind releases tension that can build up in muscles and contribute to pain.

Massage or [acupuncture](#) may also help by alleviating tension in the muscles, improving blood flow, and restoring positive energy flow through the body.

If seniors are taking prescription or even over-the-counter medications for pain relief, they should talk to their doctor about any health risks and potential interactions with other medications. Seniors' bodies may respond differently than young adults and process these drugs differently. There is also the risk for substance misuse or addiction. An in-home caregiver can support proper [medication management](#) and keep seniors safer as they navigate around their home and community.

Pain is a sign that there is an underlying problem that should be addressed. By treating pain when it occurs and taking steps to improve flexibility, balance, mobility, and stress reduction, seniors can be more proactive in managing pain and leading an active lifestyle. With the support of an in-home caregiver, seniors can stay more active, prepare healthy meals, and receive reminders for appointments and medications. In addition, a caregiver can help them to

schedule doctors' appointments should they experience pain. To learn more about supportive senior services such as in-home care, contact [Always Best Care](#) at 1 (855) 470-CARE (2273).