

## Summer Health Update 2009

### What's New:

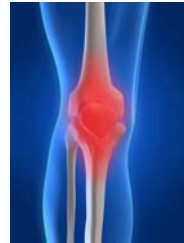
1. Nutrition for Healthy Joints
2. Scar Tissue Healing and ART
3. Avoiding the Most Common Injuries
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### Nutrition for Healthy Joints

Most people are familiar with glucosamine / chondroitin supplementation for arthritis pain and support of healthy cartilage. Glucosamine and chondroitin are known as *chondroprotective nutraceuticals* meaning that they are natural substances that stimulate the synthesis and repair of connective tissue and cartilage—and healthy cartilage doesn't cause pain. As a result, these products have been mass marketed to the public as a natural solution to everyday joint aches and pains.

There have been many studies over the years involving thousands of people concerning the safety and effectiveness of glucosamine and chondroitin supplementation. These substances have proven to be very safe and well-tolerated by most people. The effectiveness issue is not so easy to summarize in a single sentence. One reason for this has to do with dosing.

The standard recommendation for glucosamine is 1500 mg per day and for chondroitin is 1200 mg per day, in a divided dose (half at one time and half at a later time). The most recent published study concerning osteoarthritis of the knee was *not favorable* for glucosamine / chondroitin supplementation, however, the people participating in that study had a significantly higher BMI of 31.7 (Body Mass Index over 30 = obese) compared to people in other studies that *were favorable* (Body Mass Index range 25.7-27.3). Obese people tend to eat a pro-inflammatory diet of refined sugars, grains, and oils, and fatty meats—the types of foods that are associated with chronic diseases.



Another complicating factor in explaining effectiveness has to do with research that found not every brand on the open market selling glucosamine and/or chondroitin supplements has “bioavailable” ingredients or even contains what is claimed

on the label. One trusted product is Schiff “Move Free” that has passed every assay test—unlike many other over-the-counter brands.

Here are some bottom-line recommendations for glucosamine / chondroitin supplementation:

- It works well for most people with mild to moderate arthritis
- Buy and use only a trusted brand
- Most users seem to fall into one of two groups: slow and faster responders
- Larger people may need a higher dosage
- If you see no change in 90 days you are probably a non-responder

### Scar Tissue Healing and ART

The muscles, tendons, ligaments, and fascia of your body literally hold you together. These tissues are rope-like in that they have multiple strands running parallel in the same longitudinal direction. The picture below is a microscopic view of a tendon (tendons connect muscles to bones and move joints when muscles contract).



As you can see, the connective tissues are made of rows and rows of fibers giving high tensile strength from end to end. When injury occurs, from a single traumatic event or from repetitive overuse strain, there is a disruption (tearing) of the connective tissue fibers, as seen in the picture below.



After the acute phase of the injury passes, which is typically 24-48 hours, the repair process slowly begins. During healing, there will necessarily be scar tissue laid down to fill in the gaps between torn connective tissue fibers. Unlike normal connective tissue that clearly has a longitudinal orientation, scar tissue is laid down like a hairball—with fibers running every which way.

Body movement can modify the scar tissue so that weaker non-directional fibers are disrupted while the remaining fibers that are in line with existing connective tissues remain in place. But there are limitations in how well-adapted a developing connective tissue scar can get through movement alone.



Enter ART (Active Release Techniques<sup>®</sup>) that can help release non-conforming scar tissue and leave well-healed tissue in place. This is done by feeling the injured area, finding

the altered texture within the tissue structure, contacting the “bad spot(s)” and then moving the part from a shortened to a lengthened position. This creates a highly focused stretch at the specific site of repair to help modify the developing scar. This process also works well on chronic injuries that have built up adhesions and are restricting motion.

## Avoiding the Most Common Injuries

As a chiropractor, ergonomist, worker’s compensation evaluator, and Active Release Techniques<sup>®</sup> practitioner, I have seen a lot of injuries. What comes to mind most when thinking about these injuries is that they can often be prevented. Here is a list of the top five pain areas I commonly see in practice and the best ways to avoid injury:

### 1. Back pain

Avoid sitting for prolonged periods without a support to maintain the natural forward arch of your lower back. ♦ Stretch your leg muscles ♦ Avoid any unsupported forward bending when leaning over countertops, a bed or sink, or when picking something up

### 2. Neck pain

Avoid bending your head and neck forward and downward when reading ♦ Don’t use a large pillow under your head when sleeping on your back ♦ Don’t sleep on your stomach which forces you to turn your head to one side

### 3. Hand pain

Avoid holding a death grip on your mouse or over-striking your keyboard ♦ Stretch your forearm muscles frequently ♦ Rotate activities to periodically give your hands a rest

### 4. Shoulder pain

Avoid shoulder elevation and protraction by using proper ergonomics at your workstation ♦ Stretch out your chest muscles frequently ♦ Strengthen your rotator cuff muscles using small dumbbells, cables, or a theraband

### 5. Foot pain

Upgrade the insoles of your shoes with more arch support ♦ Stretch your calf muscles on a regular basis ♦ Roll a tennis ball under your foot to massage the tight and tender areas

## Questions? Just Ask!

There is a lot of information on healthcare to be found on the internet these days. In fact, sometimes there is too much! If you have any questions you need answered, or answers that need more explanation, please feel free to Contact Us at [www.PosturePress.com](http://www.PosturePress.com) anytime. If I cannot provide you with a good explanation, I’ll find someone that can.