

# Qi Gong for Knee Pain

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In 2001, more than 13.5 million American adults reported having knee joint pain, swelling, and stiffness (www.orthoinfo.aaos.org). Knee

pain can be a result of injury from a strain or accident, normal wear and tear on the knee can cause osteoarthritis, and immune system problems such as rheumatoid arthritis and systemic lupus can cause inflammation that can damage the knee. It is important to check with your doctor to determine the cause of your knee pain and the following techniques can be used right along with your doctor's recommendations.

Unless there is an injury that prohibits this, it is important to move the knee joint in order to keep circulation good and promote healing. When the knee is in pain, people often avoid using it but this only makes the problem worse. Blood and energy need to get into the knee to promote healing and movement helps dramatically. The following is a simple exercise to improve the circulation without straining the joint.

## **Walking in place exercise:**

While standing in place, bring up the heel of one foot while keeping the ball of the same foot on the floor. Put that heel back on the floor and bring the other heel up

while keeping the ball of this foot on the floor. Repeat at a moderate pace as if you were walking with the toes of both feet never leaving the floor.

## **Castor oil hot packs:**

Castor oil is a very useful topical treatment for pain or inflammation. It has been used for thousands of years in China and India and is thought to have originated in ancient Egypt. Use only cold pressed castor oil (not hexane extracted). You can find this at any health food store. Rub the oil onto the affected knee. Cover with plastic wrap (you could place a towel over the oiled knee first and then the plastic wrap if this is more comfortable.) Then place a heating pad on the area for about 20 min. You can then wash the oil off if you want. Castor oil is a clear oil but will stain clothes and towels and is hard to wash out so only use or wear clothes that you don't mind staining. Repeat the castor oil treatment once or twice a day until the knee feels better.

## **Balloon Technique:**

Visualizations are an important and simple tool for self-healing. To do this technique, visualize your knee as if it were the shape of ball. Inhale and picture this ball filling with a color like a

balloon inflating inside your knee. Pick any color that comes to mind. If your knee tends to feel hot all the time, pick a cool color like blue or green. If it tends to feel cold or ache when the weather gets cold, pick a warm color like red or yellow. Exhale and picture this balloon deflating and see the color wash down the whole leg and out of the body through all five toes. Repeat with each breath that you take. Stay with the visualization for as long as it feels good. You should get a nice, dreamy kind of feeling as you repeat this over and over. Repeat several times per day as needed for the pain.

## **Supplements for joint pain:**

Glucosamine and Chondroitin are compounds that occur naturally in cartilage and are available as dietary supplements. Glucosamine has been shown decrease the rate of cartilage destruction and promote the formation of new cartilage. It may take one to three months to see results because cartilage grows so slowly so don't give up too soon to see the benefits.