

Over the Counter Pain Management

First try:

Tylenol Arthritis Pain Formula

- 650 mg per tab of Acetaminophen
- Long acting/extended release. Lasts up to 8 hours

How to take it...

- Take on an empty stomach
- **Do not exceed** 4000 mg of Acetaminophen per 24 hour period
 - This is 2 Tylenol Arthritis Pain tabs, 3 times every 24 hours (= 3900 mg)
 - Ideally take Tylenol one hour BEFORE a known trigger or BEFORE pain gets worse. Do not tolerate increasing pain.
 - As long as you stay within the 4000 mg limit, it is safe to take Tylenol. Assess with your GP about the amount you are taking.
- Do not take Acetaminophen if you:
 - have an allergy to it
 - have a compromised liver or liver disease, or
 - are a heavy alcohol user
- **Read the label of all OTC and prescription meds to keep your daily dose of Acetaminophen at 4000mg or less.**

Did you know?

Many OTC cold and sleep remedies and prescriptions often contain Acetaminophen.

Always read the label and keep track of your doses.

For knee, shoulder, hand or foot arthritis, also try:

Creams and gels

- Capsaicin cream – contains chili peppers (Lakota and Zostrix)
 - Tricks the nerves with heat (do not use for IA)
- Creams with salicylates - NSAID (Aspercreme, Rub A535)
 - Tricks the nerves with cool and decreases inflammation
- Creams with Diclofenac – NSAID (Voltaren 1%)
 - Relieves swelling and inflammation

How to use...

- Be consistent and persistent as this method works over time not right away
- 2-3 times per day for 3-4 weeks
- Use sparingly i.e. only on the spot that hurts and wash hands after use
- If no relief in 4 weeks, either try a different type or increase the concentration
- Once you feel some relief, attempt to back off on oral meds

Next try:

Non Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDS)

(Also known as COX-1 Inhibitors)

Three types over the counter:

1. Ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin) 200 - 400 mg, every 6 hours
 - Maximum dosage 1200 mg/day for 7 days or less
2. Naproxen (Aleve) 220 mg, twice a day
 - Maximum dose 440 mg/day for 7 days or less
3. Acetylsalicylic Acid (Aspirin or ASA) 300 mg - 1000 mg, 4 times per day
 - Maximum dose 4000 mg/day for 7 days or less
 - **ASA is not recommended for OA pain management.**

NSAIDS have more side effects than Tylenol. They can:

- Irritate the stomach lining
- Increase blood pressure
- Thin the blood, which can cause you to bleed more easily
- Cause significant kidney problems
- Weight gain due to fluid retention

How to take...

- Always take with food
- Ideal for flare-ups while using Tylenol (**can be safely taken together**) or short term anti-inflammatory trial (3-7 days) to break the chronic inflammatory pain cycle
- Avoid alcohol while taking NSAID (can cause stomach bleeds)
- Do not take any NSAID along with Aspirin or any other NSAID
- **Talk with your GP and/or pharmacist** if you have kidney disease, high blood pressure, cardiac issues, diabetes, and/or have a bleeding disorder, or are on medications for any of these issues, before taking any NSAID (cream or oral)

**Always read the label
and keep track of total
24 hour dose of
whatever you are taking.
DO NOT exceed
recommended dose.**