The Arthritis Foundation's Guide To Alternative Therapies

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Complementary and alternative therapy overview. Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a chronic inflammatory condition. The disorder can involve many tissues throughout the body, although the joints are usually most severely affected. Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) has been defined by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine as "a group of diverse medical and healthcare systems, practices, and products that are not presently considered to be part of conventional medicine." I like and generally prefer the simpler term of "non-mainstream" therapies, but will largely refer to them as "CAM," consistent with common usage. For some CAM practices, there is scientific evidence that a treatment is both beneficial and safe. A Guide to Alternative Therapy Practitioners. By Sherrie Mcgregor, PhD. Last Updated: 5/14/2008. Don't Miss This. Eat, Pray, Love: Do You Need to Do All Three? Eastern Medicine May Help. Nutrition-based therapies. Nutritionists are experts in how food intake affects health. Some are employed by hospitals, clinics, and long-term care facilities to improve patient care through appropriate diet. Others work in private practice. Some nutritionists have very traditional views about diet, while others may recommend what seem like radical changes. Be sure to check the credentials and training of any nutritionist you consult, and pay attention to your intuition if her suggestions seem unreasonable or potentially unhealthy.
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The benefits of alternative therapies are hotly contested. More research is needed to determine the efficacy of nearly all of these practices, but that hasn’t stopped people from checking them out. In 2008 (the most recent valid data we could find), more than 38 percent of American adults used some form of alternative medicine, according to the NIH. Proponents of the therapy cite findings that mineral water might boost people’s immune systems or aid arthritis, but so far that research remains inconclusive.

Biofeedback. Biofeedback techniques allow people to control bodily processes that normally happen involuntarily—such as heart rate, blood pressure, muscle tension, and skin temperature—in order to improve conditions including high blood pressure, headaches, and chronic pain. The Arthritis Foundation Guide to Alternative Therapies. June 2001. Journal of the American College of Nutrition. Juan Silverio. Introduction Chinese herbal medicine (CHM) is a popular alternative therapy for osteoarthritis (OA), however the majority of CHM efficacy studies have been methodologically inadequate. This study was the first randomised, double-blind, and placebo-controlled clinical trial of a CHM formula in an Australian OA population.
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