

# Common Conditions of Bones and Joints in the Elderly

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As with all living organisms, the human body will degenerate over time. No living thing is an exception the only difference is when! Generally, the human body develops until it is 20 years of age and then starts degenerating in histology from about 30 years of age. Functionally, degeneration starts to appear at about 40 years of age. From about 50 years of age degeneration is clearly evident.

From 40 years of age, degenerative changes to bones and joints occur due to hormone changes. Cartilage viscosity is reduced but more fibres are developed. Cartilage is damage easily from impact as well as damage from mechanical force day by day over decades. Furthermore, osteological spurs develop. Also joints become inflamed and swollen (Tendonitis or Bursitis) due to irritation caused by calcification of ligaments and osteological spurs. This calcification can also affect the surrounding soft tissues and the inflammation can upset the periosteum therefore promote the development of spurs. A vicious cycle is commenced.

Common conditions of bones and joints in the elderly are Cervical Spine Syndrome, Frozen Shoulder, Disc Prolapse of the Lumbar Spine, Osteoarthritis, Heel Pain and Osteoporosis.

These problems are often treated with Chinese medicine that includes Chinese herbs (both oral and externally applied), Tuina (a therapy which includes Chinese therapeutic massage, acupressure, spine and joint manipulation) and Acupuncture. A combined therapy is required in some cases. The author prefers Tuina for the first option to separate and loosen the scar tissues, improve blood circulation, relax soft tissues and improve joint movement. Tuina also can reduce swelling and relieve pain as soon as a treatment course is completed.

**Greatpatch-S** should be applied if **pain and swelling** occurs (assists in the reduction of the inflammation of local soft tissues, reduction of swelling and relief of pain); otherwise, **Greatpatch-A** should be applied if there is a feeling of coldness, weakness, numbness or soreness **without swelling**. If **Greatpatch-S** has been applied and the swelling has gone but the patient is still feeling weak and sore, **Greatpatch-A** should be applied afterwards.

Chinese herbs also need to be considered when treating signs and causes. According to Chinese medicine, bones are related to the kidney; ligaments and tendons are related to the liver. If there is a deficiency of kidney function, bones will be lack supplement and become weaker. If there is a deficiency of liver function, ligaments and tendons cannot be maintained and will be lose strength. Therefore, invigoration of the kidney and the liver are the way to treat the causes of bone and joint degeneration. Of course, to set up a formula, one must do so according to the principal rule of traditional Chinese medicine -- -- diagnosis and treatment based on an overall analysis of the illness and the patient's conditions ---- formulated individually.