

ALTA Net News

The Official Publication of the Atlanta Lawn Tennis Association, Inc.
September/October 2006

In It To Win It

ALTA's Up/Down League

A Good Routine

May help you stay in the game longer

CELADRIN

This all-natural and well-researched new product is generating a great deal of excitement. A growing body of research suggests that essential fatty acids relieve systemic inflammation.

Celadrin's unique process of esterifying these fatty acids makes them particularly effective in treating the pain and inflammation of arthritis. Celadrin lubricates the body's cell membranes, making them younger, more elastic

match points

>> Health & Fitness



A Good Routine

May help you stay in the game longer

By Jason Theodosakis, M.D., M.S., M.P.H.

Even if you only hit the courts on weekends, you probably know how painful and debilitating tennis elbow or a rolled ankle can be. Joint pain is a top complaint heard by doctors. We have 143 different joints that allow us to perform the thousands of motions each day. Establishing a proactive joint health routine makes sense.

Your joints' articular cartilage must be present and healthy for smooth, pain-free movement. More slippery than ice, cartilage makes it possible for the ends of your bones to slide smoothly and easily across each other.

Cartilage can be damaged by sudden trauma or a gradual build-up of many tiny injuries. If the cartilage surface becomes ragged and pockmarked, movement may become painful and it may lead to osteoarthritis.

As the joint degenerates, the joint lining or synovium often becomes inflamed. It tries to solve the problem by producing more synovial fluid: the slick, watery substance that lubricates and nourishes the cartilage. But the fluid ends up flooding the joint space causing swelling and perhaps even more pain. All you know is that your knee really hurts, it's swollen,

it's hard to bend, and you don't want to put weight on it.

To enhance your performance and help prevent injuries, think like a pro. Pros spend much more time than amateurs on training and drills to improve their flexibility, muscle strength and neuromuscular coordination.

Sport-specific fitness: Add drills and cross training to your routine. Make sure your body is toned and prepared to play properly. Starting each activity slowly then increasing your intensity, is often more effective than stretching to prevent injuries.

Get a biomechanical evaluation: Improper alignment or incorrect use of muscles, bones, tendons, ligaments and joints can cause excessive wear and tear on the body, leading to injury. A biomechanical evaluation will reveal how you are using your joints, and show you how to counteract damaging joint stress.

■ **Keep weight off and attitude up.** Maintaining an ideal body weight may even help restore joint health. It is also important to fight depression and have a positive attitude.

■ **Eat a variety of healthful foods.** Your body needs many different nutrients to run in peak form. If you continually eat

the same foods (even highly nutritious foods) you may miss out on important building blocks for your health. A wide variety of fruits and vegetables is always a good idea.

■ **If you are injured, see your doctor.** Make sure you are completely recovered and rehabilitated before resuming play.

For pain, I'd rather recommend a supplement or topical alternative than a drug. The most common drugs used, NSAIDs (Nonsteroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs) such as over-the-counter ibuprofen, naproxen sodium and dozens of others, can lead to kidney disease, ulcers, heart attacks or strokes. NSAIDs and other anti-inflammatory treatments don't help with the healing and may actually impair it. There are several safe, natural alternatives to find relief:

For simple strains and sprains that you can still walk on, try the RICE approach:

R: Rest your injured body part to allow damaged tissues time to heal.

I: Ice the injured area as soon as you can to help reduce inflammation and swelling.

C: Compress the injured area with a restrictive device to prevent swelling.

E: Elevate the injured area to help prevent swelling.

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GLUCOSAMINE, CHONDROITIN AND ASU

These supplements, which are actually prescription or over-the-counter in dozens of countries (outside of the U.S.) have been proven effective against joint pain in more than 40 human clinical studies. Slow acting, they take weeks or months to reach maximal effect, however, and like any treatment, they don't work for everyone.

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and more fluid. This includes increasing the cushioning in bones and joints to allow pain-free movement for people with arthritis.

GINGER AND BOSWELLIA

These herbs, and their derivatives, have

been used throughout history for treating pain from arthritis or injury. Each appears to have anti-inflammatory properties when taken in sufficient doses. Science is beginning to uncover the mechanisms of action for these natural products, and a few small clinical studies have yielded some positive results.

The best way to achieve longevity in your activity is to combine a number of factors including: sports specific training, improving biomechanics, weight control and an anti-inflammatory diet and the proper use of dietary supplements. With a little preparation, and some simple pain treatment strategies, you should be able to continue your active lifestyle for many years to come. ●

Dr. Jason Theodosakis is a practicing medical doctor, residency-trained and board-certified, in the specialty of preventive medicine. He is also fellowship-trained in sports medicine and is considered to be one of the world's foremost authorities on the clinical use of dietary supplements for arthritis.