

12 'Ancient' Natural Remedies Better Than Drugs. These "Grandma-approved" remedies were passed down through the ages because they actually work.

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When it comes to traditional remedies, don't mistake "old" for obsolete. In the case of these 12 natural remedies, they may be old, but they really are tried and true.

In the modern digital age, information that has stood the test of time is increasingly drowned out by the latest crazes. Health trends and fad diets hawked by fitness gurus offer you endless ways to get fitter and be better than you were yesterday, but how much of their advice will actually "stick" and become multi-generational wisdom?

If you'd like to learn a dozen best-practices for your health that are "Grandma approved," read on and discover 12 natural remedies that were passed down through the ages because they actually work.

1. Neti Pot for Allergies

A neti pot is a traditional remedy used to cleanse the sinus passages of mucus, dust and irritants, in much the same way that we bathe our bodies. Popular in the Far East, the tradition of the neti pot has not been widely adopted in the U.S. However, natural health enthusiasts have kept the tradition alive to aid with seasonal allergies and most drug stores and pharmacies have them in stock.

A warm saline solution is prepared in the neti pot using distilled water. The spout is placed against each nostril, and with your head slightly tilted, the water is poured into each nostril while breathing through your mouth.

The water flows out the opposite nostril, carrying debris and pollen that lodge in your sinus cavities and cause irritation. The warm water soothes and relaxes the delicate sinus tissues and breathing can return to normal. Like bathing, neti pots must be used regularly to adjust to the routine and keep pollens at bay during **allergy** season. Some important neti pot tips:

- Use distilled water only
- Warm the water to 98.6 degrees F
- Use saline packets or make your own using 16 ounces of distilled water to 1 teaspoon mineral (not iodized) salt

2. Hot Tea for Cold and Flu

Tea is one of the oldest healing potions in the modern world. With more than 124 beneficial pharmacological actions in our GreenMedInfo.com database, there are **hundreds of reasons to drink tea**. And here's one more: it can help you get over a cold or flu faster.

Green tea is known to possess antiviral components and has demonstrated in trials to be **inversely associated with influenza infection**.^[i] These benefits are not limited to green tea. The herbal tea Echinacea Plus was found in a clinical trial to **shorten cold and flu symptoms** compared to placebo.^[ii]

Why not add some honey to your cup? During cold and flu season, **honey** is a great way to enhance your tea's taste and healing properties. Honey not only increases flavor, it can **boost your immunity to influenza**.^[iii] And if you have some, add a squeeze of **lemon juice** for extra vitamin C and anti-inflammatory effects.

3. Turmeric for Joint Pain

One of the most therapeutic substances on Earth is a flowering plant known as curcuma longa. You may not recognize the plant's name, but its use is unmistakable — a bright orange culinary spice that is a key ingredient in many popular Asian dishes. **Turmeric**, the exotic spice produced by grinding the curcuma longa plant's roots into a fine powder, has been studied in thousands of scientific trials, not for the enticing flavor, but for the herb's near-limitless healing properties.

For millennia, scientists and herbalists have been exploring the therapeutic properties in this magical herb. Widely used by athletes and active adults, turmeric and its isolated active ingredient, **curcumin**, have been shown to reduce joint pain and inflammation in ways that outperform **many modern drugs**.

In fact, a 2012 study showed that curcumin outperformed diclofenac, a standard arthritis treatment, and ibuprofen on arthritis pain and quality-of-life indicators with no negative side effects.^[iv]

Like most herbs, consistent supplementation is key to effectiveness. That's not hard to do with turmeric. You can add it to your diet in delicious curries and exotic dishes or take it in supplement form. Golden milk tea, also called the **turmeric latte**, is another delicious way to benefit from the anti-inflammatory properties — and delicious taste — of this priceless plant.

4. Hydrotherapy for Muscle Strain

Spa bathing has been used to soothe the body and spirit for thousands of years. Ancient Romans used intricate plumbing systems to pipe and heat the healing mineral

waters of places like Bath, England, so they could physically rejuvenate and relax from the stressors of life.

Whether it's occasional body pain from strain or overwork, or a chronic condition such as back pain or fibromyalgia, soaking, steaming and showering can be the remedy to set you on your feet again. The best part? You don't need to travel to a health spa to enjoy the benefits of **hydrotherapy**. Turn your bathroom into a healing oasis with three simple things: hot water, cold water and **magnesium chloride**.

The next time you're feeling strained, draw a warm bath and add at least 2 cups of Epsom salts. Thermal mineral water contains important minerals, including calcium, magnesium, sodium and potassium, and a 20-minute soak soothes inflammatory pathways that are linked to pain response. **A 2019 study** found that daily mineral soaks provided clear therapeutic benefit for several musculoskeletal diseases.^[vi]

For an extra therapeutic boost, try finishing off your hot bath with a **cold shower**. It may seem like an abrupt way to finish, but just two minutes under a cold stream of water increases blood flow and lymphatic circulation and boosts your immunity, among other health benefits.

5. Ice Packs for Swelling

Some minor injuries, such as a pulled muscle or a mild impact that causes swelling, can be effectively treated at home by applying an ice pack to the affected area. But how do you know if your injury should be treated by soaking in a hot bath or applying a cold pack?

Cold and heat are the most commonly applied at-home pain remedies. Heat therapies, such as a thermal mineral bath, are for relaxing stiff, aching muscles and increasing blood flow to the area. Ice is generally used for recent acute injuries where swelling is present. Ice packs can help reduce swelling and pain from twisted ankles and strained elbows and slow any bleeding into the tissues that causes bruising.^[vii]

The key to this remedy's effectiveness lies in elevating and resting the swollen area and applying the ice pack right away. Do not place ice directly on the skin; use a towel or cloth as a barrier. You can use a bag of frozen vegetables or place ice into a tea towel, just watch the area for signs of ice burn (when the skin turns pink) and do not ice for more than 30 minutes at a time.

6. Black Seed for Stomachache

You may already know about the therapeutic properties of black seed, aka **nigella sativa**. A traditional remedy that is said to cure "**everything but death**," black seed is taken as a dietary supplement by natural health

advocates the world-over. One of the ailments that black seed has proven useful for is gastritis, or inflammation of the stomach lining, a problem that affects everyone on occasion.

The use of oral medications, consuming too much alcohol or rich food, or simply experiencing a stress-filled day wherein proper nutrition is neglected can all ignite a bout of gastritis or upset stomach, symptoms of which include stomach pain, cramps, nausea and sometimes vomiting. Another common trigger for gastritis is *Helicobacter pylori*, also known as *H. pylori*, a bacterium found in half the world's population that can lead to the development of stomach ulcers if left untreated.^[viii]

To combat gastritis and calm inflamed stomach tissues, research has shown that a spoonful of ground black seed and honey paste, taken three times a day after meals, can significantly reduce symptoms and even **eradicate the presence of *H. pylori* bacteria**.^[viii]

Making black seed a regular addition to your diet can have added benefits, as well. Multiple studies have shown the **lipid-lowering effects** of black seed on hypercholesterolemia, for example.

7. Intimacy for Depression

While it's important to take care of the physical body, the need for trusted social bonds is equally necessary for a vital, healthy life. Intimate relationships, be they physical, emotional, or both, are proven to be critical to your happiness and overall quality of life.

In a longitudinal study of young adults over 40 years that measured their happiness during college and again 35 years later, the happiest participants were the ones who said they valued and enjoyed their close relationships.^[ix] It wasn't critical to keep the same partners to benefit; those who placed a high value on developing close bonds were the happiest across time.

In terms of intimacy versus isolation, intimacy is the remedy when isolation creates disease of the spirit. If you are partnered, make the effort to strengthen and sustain closeness by cuddling, eye-gazing and sharing and listening with empathy.

If you're single, consider the many **health benefits of dancing** with a partner. Age is not a barrier to entry, nor to receiving the positive effects. **A 2009 study** of patients in a dementia care unit showed 67% of patients who danced with staff members experienced a significant reduction in agitation, uplifted mood, increased social bonding and improvement in overall quality of life.^[x] Added bonus — it's a great way to stay fit.

8. Apple Cider Vinegar for Odor

Another old remedy that really works was reportedly used by Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, as far back as 400 B.C. **Apple cider vinegar**, or ACV, has health benefits that have been known for millennia, thanks to powerful **antifungal** and **antimicrobial properties**.

Thanks to its high acid profile, apple cider vinegar makes a wonderful remedy for halitosis. For an instant bad breath remedy, add 1/2 tablespoon of ACV to a cup of purified water and gargle the mixture in your mouth for 10 seconds at a time until the cup is empty. Be sure to swish in the back of your cheeks and into your upper and lower gumline to eradicate any odor-causing bacteria.

ACV can help combat unpleasant body odors by adjusting your skin's pH level, which eliminates odor-causing bacteria. For armpit odor, wipe your underarm area each morning with undiluted apple cider vinegar on a cloth or cotton ball before applying a natural deodorant. Be sure to avoid **antiperspirants containing aluminum** and other **cancer-causing chemicals**. For foot odor, fill a pan with warm water and add 1/3 cup of ACV, then let your feet soak in this mixture for 15 minutes once per week.

9. Pomegranate Juice for Fatigue

Pomegranate may be without equal when it comes to healthy foods. Eating the fruiting ovary of the pomegranate bush is so beneficial, it just might **save your life**. And on those low-energy days, a shot of pomegranate juice may also save your to-do list.

For a quick pick-me-up, 4 to 6 ounces of pomegranate juice is a great way to ward off fatigue by supplying vital nutrients, a mega-dose of antioxidants and helping maintain stable blood sugar levels. Pomegranate juice has demonstrated in **multiple trials** to contribute to **blood sugar homeostasis**,^[xi] making it useful in managing energy throughout the day.

Pomegranate juice can help **regulate blood pressure**,^[xii] another factor that can contribute to fatigue. Pomegranate's remarkable astringency can be felt in your mouth after eating the fruit or drinking its juice, and it may be key to pomegranate's energizing superpowers.

When blood flow is impeded to the heart, energy levels dip, such as in cases of atherosclerosis, when arterial plaque builds up in the arteries. In a **three-year trial** of patients with atherosclerosis who supplemented their diet with pomegranate juice, artery-clogging plaque was reduced by up to 30%, effectively reversing the disease process by up to 39% within one year.^[xiii]

Additional benefits included a 130% increase in patients' antioxidant status.^[xiv] So, raise a glass of pomegranate juice and drink to your health and high energy.

10. Arnica for Bruising

Arnica montana is a perennial flower in the same family as sunflowers, dandelions and marigolds. Sometimes called the "mountain daisy," arnica is a natural **ibuprofen alternative** that can be useful to quell minor pain and bruising associated with superficial injuries.

Due to the highly addictive nature of opioids and arnica's usefulness for both pain and bruising, arnica has become a popular remedy after cosmetic surgeries such as **face lifts**. A study comparing the effects of topically applied compounds on bruise healing found that **20% arnica reduced bruising** more than .003% white petrolatum, 1% vitamin K and 3% retinol creams.^[xv]

Arnica is generally applied as an ointment or gel and can be purchased in homeopathic formulas and as a flower remedy.

11. Eucalyptus for Stuffy Nose

Known for its invigorating fragrance, **eucalyptus** is revered for its ability to soothe irritated sinuses and make breathing easier when you have a stuffed-up nose. Eucalyptus has **anti-inflammatory properties** that may contribute to this airway-clearing effect.

You can enjoy the therapeutic properties of eucalyptus by adding a few drops of essential oil to a humidifier, especially if you place it by your bed at night. If your stuffy nose is acute, try adding fresh eucalyptus leaves or 10 to 12 drops of essential oil to a bowl of steaming water, then placing a towel over your head while you breathe in deeply.

This practice can also have a beneficial effect on your lungs, as evidenced by a **2018 study** on mice with induced emphysema that experienced lung repair after inhaling eucalyptus vapors 15 minutes a day for 60 days.^[xvi]

12. Healthy Habits for Under-Eye Circles

Dark circles under your eyes can be the result of many causes, including genetics, dietary deficiencies, stress, sleep deprivation and smoking, among other factors. No single remedy will work for everyone; however, you can take a multi-pronged approach to reduce dark circles and restore a fresh-faced appearance.

Make sure you are well hydrated by consuming around 2 liters of purified water each day. Next, eliminate nutrient deficiencies by eating a diverse diet of whole, organic

foods. Sleep is crucial to reducing dark circles, so do your best to get a full seven to nine hours of sleep each night, preferably in a cool room with fresh, circulating air.

If you're currently using cigarettes, consider a **smoking cessation program**. Radiation exposure from cigarettes is **36 times worse for your health than working at a nuclear reactor**,^[xvii] so you can bet it contributes to dark under-eye circles.

Finally, **sunlight deficiency may be as deadly as smoking**,^[xviii] so be sure to get at least 15 minutes of unfiltered sunlight through your irises daily to boost important vitamin D levels.

While some stress is unavoidable, don't let life's pressures deter you from adhering to these basic healthy habits. By prioritizing self-care, you will remain stronger, healthier and more capable of managing life's stressors in a balanced way.

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