

# Treatment of Arthritis – the Ayurvedic way

## Ravi Bhanot

Written by Ravi Bhanot, a Research Ayurvedic Pharmacist, with The Ayurveda Institute of Europe.

The term arthritis is often used interchangeably in everyday language to refer to pain connected with movement. Arthritis means inflammation of joints – with pain, stiffness and loss of movement – whilst rheumatism usually refers to aches or pains that come from muscles, tendons or ligaments, as well as from joints. Arthritis can be a secondary condition arising from other diseases; there is a form associated with psoriasis, for example. There are many varieties of arthritis; this section looks at three of the most common forms.

### Osteoarthritis

This is a very common condition, affecting almost everyone over the age of 60 to some extent, but to varying degrees. For the majority of people, this may be experienced merely as stiff joints. For some, the symptoms can include pain, stiffness and swelling and can lead to reduced movement as the condition worsens. It usually develops slowly, although when the condition is more advanced, it may include inflammation. It is caused by wear and tear of the hyaline cartilage, and is made worse by previous injury or excessive

pressure on the joint in overweight people. As the cartilage thins with age, cracks appear and penetrate to the bone underneath, and bony growths can also develop. Weight bearing joints such as the hip and the knee are most often affected, and also the fingers (which may not be painful) and the spine.

### Recommendations for massage.

Massage is locally contraindicated if joints are inflamed. Otherwise Massage can be beneficial in providing some pain relief, and gentle mobilisation and stretching of the joints may prevent further deterioration, provided more care is taken around any painful joints. Kneading and draining of muscles surrounding affected joints reduces stiffness and aids circulation.

### Rheumatoid arthritis

This form of arthritis is not a degenerative condition, but is included here, because of the potential confusion with osteoarthritis. Clients will be very clear about which sort they have; you won't have to make a diagnosis. It is an auto immune disease, in which the immune system