Heat Therapy

by AMY MANLEY

Treating Osteoarthritis With Heat Therapy

While there are many effective treatment options for osteoarthritis available, turning up the heat may be just want you need to rid yourself of pain. Heat therapy treatment for osteoarthritis continues to grow in popularity due to the ease and effectiveness it offers to patients.

By learning more about heat therapy, how it's applied, and the benefits it offers for osteoarthritis, you can determine if this form of treatment might be right for your needs.

Simple Treatment

As mentioned, there's several treatment options available for osteoarthritis, yet some of these methods may have more side-effects than you'd like. Medications are often used to treat the condition, but when pain gets out of control, it can be difficult to find a medication that works to relieve the pain and high dosages may lead to ugly side effects that are difficult to ignore. Aside from pain medication, some direct pain treatment shots are used to stop pain within the area, but these can be an ineffective, too infrequent, or simply ineffective.

Heat therapy is becoming the 'go-to' treatment for osteoarthritis because it's not only effective- it's simple and free from side-effects. Heat therapy offers a wide-array of benefits. For one, the applications of heat helps to reduce pain within the area where it's applied. Many people find their pain relieved from heat therapy treatment in just a few minutes. It also offers anti-inflammatory effects, which are crucial for patients with osteoarthritis, and can even improve mobility.

As you know, osteoarthritis not only leads to pain within the joints, but can make it difficult to move the area where the joint is acting up. Many patients who use heat therapy find that when used directly on the joint, it works to increase mobility by increasing how far the joint can be moved. Heat therapy also helps to control spasms, which is very beneficial for those who experience regular spasms from their osteoarthritis, especially at night when sleep is compromised from the spasms.

Applying Heat Therapy

If you decide to use this form of therapy to treat your osteoarthritis, it's important that the application process is done correctly. The first piece of advice offered from professionals is to be wary of how much heat you're applying. It's important that you simply warm the joint, not overheat with too high of a temperature, as this can be damaging to the joints. Choose a heat level that is appropriate and apply to the area for 10 minutes at a time.

There's no set period of time you can use heat treatment for. However, it's important to use a series technique, not prolonged direct application. 10 minute intervals must always be used. Some patients experience long-term joint pain relief after just one 10 minute session, but if more treatment is needed, 10 minutes on and 10 minutes off is recommended, as it will prevent overheating of the joints.

There are different heat sources you can use for this type of therapy. Some patents prefer heating pads, while others enjoy using the adhesive heat pads sold as pharmacies. Paraffin baths, hot showers, hot baths, and hot water bottles all additional heat therapy options available that are effective in reliving joint pain.