

How to Use CBD for Arthritis Pain

Written by Dr. Andrew Colucci

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CBD Relieves Arthritis



Arthritis—a medical condition characterized by chronic and sometimes debilitating joint pain—is the leading cause of disability in the United States according to the Arthritis Foundation.[1]

Additionally, this condition currently afflicts roughly 54 million adult Americans, with this number expected to rise to 78 million by the year 2040.

In an effort to relieve this chronic pain and improve their quality of life without having to rely on what are oftentimes highly addictive painkillers, many arthritis patients are seeking alternative treatments.

Many are finding these positive results with CBD products.



Arthritis and CBD Research

CBD stands for cannabidiol, a chemical compound found in hemp plants.

The way it works is by interacting with our endocannabinoid system, which is where the CBD attaches to cannabinoid receptors (CB1 and CB2 receptors, specifically) located throughout our body to create a variety of healthful effects.[2]

CBD is different than medical marijuana in that it is non-psychoactive in nature. So, when patients use CBD to better manage their arthritis pain, they don't get the high typically associated with this particular drug.

How well does it work as a form of arthritis treatment? Let's look at the research.

Research has found that CBD products such as cannabidiol oil, hemp oil, and other products derived from the cannabis plant provide a number of positive health benefits for arthritis patients.

For instance, one animal study published by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) found that topical CBD can help relieve arthritis symptoms in the knees.[3] This study credits the reduction of pain and joint swelling, at least in part, to CBD's anti-inflammatory properties.

Healthline adds that, while more clinical trials need to be conducted in this area, CBD oil also appears to offer promising benefits for individuals seeking an effective pain management option for rheumatoid arthritis.[4] And it does so with rather mild side effects, some of which include nausea, fatigue, diarrhea, and changes in appetite.



Full Spectrum CBD vs CBD Isolate

When choosing CBD products to reduce arthritis pain, there are two terms that are important to know: full-spectrum CBD and CBD isolate.

Full-spectrum CBD products include cannabinoids, terpenes, and other compounds extracted from the entire cannabis plant whereas CBD isolates are pure CBD (at least 99 percent) with no other active ingredients.[5]

Which is better for arthritis pain?

Research has found that full-spectrum CBD offers more health benefits than CBD isolate due to the synergy that occurs between all of the healthful compounds found within the full spectrum CBD.

For instance, a study published in the journal *Pharmacology & Pharmacy* used extracts from the cannabis sativa subspecies of the cannabis plant on mice and learned that, when the whole plant was used, it was easier to achieve the desired anti-inflammatory response.[6]

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Forms of CBD Beneficial to Arthritis Patients

CBD comes in a variety of forms. There are CBD oils and creams, CBD tinctures, CBD gummies, and more. This can make it confusing for arthritis patients to determine which one to use.

The problem with some of these products is that they don't always provide the desired effect. For instance, CBD gummies have bioavailability issues. This means that your body isn't able to absorb and use all of the CBD contained within them, essentially lowering the amount of CBD that is available to your endocannabinoid system.

Instead, CBD oil products taken sublingually (under the tongue) don't have this same bioavailability issues, thus your system can use more of the CBD and you get a better response. In fact, the rate of absorption of CBD oils taken sublingually is 12 to 35 percent compared to oral consumption's rate of just 4 to 20 percent.[7]

Arthritis patients can also find relief by combining CBD products, ultimately creating a more therapeutic response. For example, using a CBD oil used in conjunction with a quality topical CBD cream can oftentimes provide pain relief.

In addition to choosing the right form of CBD, it is just as important to take the right dose. It's not uncommon for people to not take a high enough dose of CBD oil and mistakenly think it doesn't work for them.

Because everyone is different when it comes to dosing, Daniel Clauw, MD, a professor at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, suggests that arthritis patients start with 5 to 10 mg just at night. [8]

If you aren't getting the relief you seek, you can then slowly increase your dosage up to 50 to 100 mg per day (split between two doses) to reach your desired effect.

For more information visit: <https://www.drugscience.org/try-cbd-for-arthritis/>