

How to choose between different joint supporting supplements



*Aches and pains are universal complaints associated with aging and wear and tear. Are you baffled by the enormous array of products that claim to provide relief? This article from our friends at **Protocol for Life Balance** breaks it down in understandable form, and will help you select a quality product to address your concerns.*

—Dr. Ronald Hoffman

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Many joint health supplements exist in today's marketplace, making it difficult to select the product or products best suited to your unique needs. The first step in the quest for the right joint health supplement(s) is to identify a well-established, reputable brand with a longstanding history for exceptional quality control, regulatory compliance, and scientific understanding. By investing a little time reviewing the content on the company of interest's website and product labels, you will quickly develop a discerning eye for identifying trusted brands. Key elements to look for include mention of following good manufacturing practices

(GMP), obtaining third party certifications [e.g., certified organic by QAI (Quality Assurance International), non-GMO Project Verified, Informed Sport, ISO (international organization for standardization), UL], making reasonable product health claims (by law dietary supplements are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease) and properly identifying ingredients on the product label (e.g., the common name, Latin name, and plant part should always be listed for a botanical ingredient).

Once you have established that the brand is reliable, you can begin to review the joint health products that they offer. Joint health ingredients generally fall under two main subcategories: botanicals (e.g., turmeric, boswellia, willow bark, ginger, etc.) and “joint nutrients” (e.g., collagen, MSM, hyaluronic acid, glucosamine, chondroitin, etc.). Botanicals include whole plant parts, extracts, and their constituents. This subcategory is predominately used to attenuate occasional minor aches and pains brought on by overexertion.* “Joint nutrients” are structurally similar to those naturally present in the joint tissues and other parts of the body. Some of these nutrients also have the ability to support a balanced immune system response to typical joint stress.* These nutrients are typically used for longer periods of time to nourish joint tissue and help maintain healthy joint structure.*

In addition to deciding whether botanicals or “joint nutrients” or a combination thereof are best suited for your unique needs, you also want to select ingredients that are validated through scientific research and/or a long history of use for joint health.*

For example, willow bark extracts have been used for centuries to modulate the immune system response to pain and injury related to overexertion and clinical studies confirm that willow bark extracts can help to alleviate minor aches and pains associated with overexertion.*^{1,2} Ginger root is another traditional herb with many applications that has been used for centuries by herbalists for its pain-relieving effects.* Clinical evidence has confirmed that ginger root and ginger extracts are effective relievers of pain due to overexertion or stress.*^{3,4} *Boswellia serrata* is a botanical commonly used in Ayurveda (traditional Indian herbalism) for minor aches and pain.* Proprietary boswellia extracts such as Aprèsflex® have been clinically shown to reduce the minor aches and pains of overexertion in as little as five days after beginning supplementation, while positively influencing joint mobility for up to 90 days.* Aprèsflex® has efficacy at a relatively low dosage – only 50 mg twice daily – which makes this ingredient ideal for a supplement.*⁵⁻⁷

Curcuma longa, also known as turmeric, is one of the best known plants for joint health.* In addition to its historical uses, it has been extensively studied in laboratory settings and in clinical trials for its ability to support a healthy response to biological stress and to relieve temporary joint pain due to overexertion.* Turmeric extracts have low bioavailability, so it is important to choose a form of turmeric that has been bio-enhanced for optimal absorption, or a turmeric-based product that has been blended with complementary ingredients for optimal clinical effect.*^{8,9}

Ocimum sanctum, commonly known as tulsi or holy basil, has been used for more than 2,000 years by traditional herbalists and has demonstrated a wide spectrum of biological activities in laboratory settings, including its ability to modulate immune response to biological stress.* This popular sacred plant of the Indian subcontinent can be used as part of a botanical formula for joint support.*^{10,11} Other plant-derived ingredients to look for are enzymes like bromelain, and/or modulators of oxidative stress such as green tea extracts, resveratrol, and berberine.*¹²⁻¹⁶

For “joint nutrient” products, it is also important to select ingredients that have been clinically validated and/or have a history of safe use to support joint structure and function, especially since these products are often consumed for months or even years.*

One example of a safe, clinically validated joint nutrient is UC-II®, an undenatured type II collagen. UC-II® joint supporting properties have been demonstrated in randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical studies.*^{17,18} An added benefit to UC-II®, is that only 40 mg per day is needed to get the full effect for joint mobility and comfort.*^{17,18} This small daily dose allows for an easy once daily intake of a small capsule for added convenience.

Protocol For Life Balance® is a brand of affordable high-quality dietary supplements offering a wide range of joint support supplements.* Notable products in this category include Joint-UC™, which features a combination of clinically validated UC-II® and Aquamin®, a unique blend of seaweed-derived minerals. D-Flame™ is formulated with a blend of botanical extracts such as *Ocimum sanctum*, turmeric, ginger, green tea, boswellia and more.* In addition, Protocol For Life Balance® has recently launched Ache Action™, a unique botanical formula that includes standardized extracts of willow bark (minimum 14% salicin), ginger root (minimum 5% gingerols), and *Boswellia serrata* as ApresFlex® (10 mg AKBA), to alleviate normal pain due to overexertion by acting broadly on different pathways when the immune system is triggered.* When selecting a joint supporting supplement, it is also recommended to consult with a healthcare professional who can create a customized joint support program.*

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* These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.