honey or aloe gel and apply it directly to your skin. For muscle strain, try rubbing ginger oil into your skin or adding powdered ginger to your bath to stimulate circulation.

Taken internally, turmeric is said to help stretch ligaments, calm inflammations of many kinds, and ease pain due to eye infections. Try taking 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon of powder between meals two to three times daily. You can swallow it straight, mix it with honey, or sip two or three cupfuls of turmeric tea between meals. Eating papaya with turmeric, or taking it with bromelain, has been shown to increase its absorption.

There is evidence that taking ginger internally can relieve swollen joints caused by certain types of arthritis. You can eat it raw, make ginger tea, or take it in capsule form. The recommended dosage is up to one capsule (500 mg) dried powder or up to 50 grams of grated fresh ginger three times per day. You can also eat a one-inch piece of crystalized ginger three times per day.

Some cautions to consider: The warming quality of turmeric has the potential to boost the vata (air) or pitta (fire) dosha, or metabolic body type, to excess when taken in large doses over time, so it's not recommended for people with certain pitta conditions like severe liver disorders. It's also not recommended for pregnant women. Ginger, on the other hand, is tridoshic (that is, it brings balance to all the doshas, including kapha, or earth and water) when taken fresh, not dried.

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