

Researchers find daily ginger consumption eases muscle pain by 25 percent

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For centuries, ginger root has been used as a folk remedy for a variety of ailments such as colds and upset stomachs. But now, researchers at the University of Georgia have found that daily ginger consumption also reduces muscle pain caused by exercise.

While ginger had been shown to exert anti-inflammatory effects in rodents, its effect on experimentally-induced human muscle pain was largely unexplored, said Patrick O'Connor, a professor in the College of Education's department of kinesiology. It was also believed that heating ginger, as occurs with cooking, might increase its pain-relieving effects.

O'Connor directed two studies examining the effects of 11 days of raw and heat-treated ginger supplementation on muscle pain. Collaborators included Chris Black, an assistant professor of [kinesiology](#) at Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville, UGA doctoral student Matt Herring and David Hurley, an associate professor of population health in UGA's College of Veterinary Medicine.

Participants in the studies, 34 and 40 volunteers, respectively, consumed capsules containing two grams of either raw or heat-treated ginger or a placebo for 11 consecutive days. On the eighth day they performed 18 extensions of the elbow flexors with a heavy weight to induce moderate [muscle injury](#) to the arm. [Arm function](#), inflammation, pain and a biochemical involved in pain were assessed prior to and for three days after exercise.

The studies showed that daily ginger supplementation reduced the exercise-induced pain by 25 percent, and the effect was not enhanced by heat-treating the ginger.

"The economic and personal costs of pain are extremely high," said O'Connor. "Muscle pain generally is one of the most common types of pain and eccentric exercise-induced [muscle pain](#) specifically is a common type of injury related to sports and/or recreation (e.g., gardening). Anything that can truly relieve this type of pain will be greatly welcomed by the many people who are experiencing it."

More information: The study, which will be published in the September issue of the Journal of Pain, is currently available online at www.jpain.org/home

Provided by University of Georgia

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