

Stan Malstrom's Herbal Aspirin

A Natural Aspirin Alternative for Headaches, Arthritis, and Other Painful Conditions

Stan Malstrom's Herbal Aspirin formula is a natural analgesic formula created as an alternative to aspirin by the herbalist and nutritionist Stan Malstrom. It combines white willow with valerian and capsicum for greater effectiveness. Compared to some of the high-powered medications developed for pain in the pharmaceutical industry, this blend is milder in its effects, but it is also safer for long-term use.

It reduces swelling and inflammation, eases general aches and pains, relaxes muscle cramps, and promotes blood flow. It can be used for headaches, aches and pains associated with colds and flu, fevers, pain associated with muscle tension, arthritis, and PMS pain. Here's more specific information on each of the herbs in this blend.

White Willow Bark (*Salix alba*)

Before the advent of synthetic aspirin, willow bark was the treatment of choice among Native Americans and Europeans for reducing fevers, relieving headaches and easing arthritis pain. In Western tradition, its use traces back over 2000 years to Hippocrates and has been used for centuries to ease pain and reduce inflammation in arthritis, bursitis, and other inflammatory conditions.

The salicylates (salicin, salicortin, tremulacin, & populin) found in white willow bark inhibit the prostaglandins that are involved in inflammation. It is milder acting than aspirin and other modern non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs), but it is also easier on the stomach and unlikely to cause the ulcerations associated with excessive aspirin use.

Willow bark's action is not limited to salicylates, however. It also contains tannins, which help to tone and contract tissues, reducing the swelling associated with inflammation. Specific indications for white willow bark include pain from osteoarthritis, tendonitis, bursitis, sprains, backache, headaches, and menstrual cramps.

Valerian Root (*Valeriana officinalis*)

Valerian acts as a sedative, antispasmodic and diuretic. Although its smell has been reviled since antiquity (Dioscorides, the most famous of Greek herbalists, described it as being like

"bad cheese or mildewed clothing") it has been widely used for its ability to calm the nerves and to induce sleep without side effects.

Because of its antispasmodic, or muscle-relaxing, properties, valerian has traditionally been used to treat tension, headaches, insomnia, and hyperactivity. It has mild pain-relieving remedies, especially for tension headaches or pain caused by muscle cramps or spasms. It may also help with pain associated with backache or menstrual cramps.

Capsicum Fruit (*Capsicum annuum*)

Capsicum is best known in spice form as cayenne pepper. Capsicum contains capsaicin, a compound that blocks substance P receptors in the nervous system. Substance P is the neurotransmitter involved in signaling pain to the brain. Capsaicin, which is also responsible for the peppers' hot or stimulating sensation, blocks pain transmission when applied topically or taken internally.

However, capsicum also stimulates blood flow and blood flow also helps ease pain by delivering oxygen and nutrients to damaged tissues. This also speeds healing of damaged tissues. Many herbalists also believe that capsicum helps catalyze the actions of the other herbs in a formula, helping them to work faster and more effectively.

Suggested Use

Take 1-2 capsules every hour as needed for pain. It may be helpful for headaches, arthritis and other tissue damage, back pain, and pain associated with stress and muscle tension. It may not be effective with severe pain. Use it with caution if taking blood thinners.

Selected References

- A Hand Book of Native American Herbs* by Alma R. Hutchings
- Nutritional Herbology* by Mark Pederson
- Materia Medica and Pharmacology* by David M.R. Culbreth
- Weiner's Herbal* by Michael A. Weiner
- Strategies for Health* by Steven Horne

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