How to Get Rid of Muscle Cramps, Charley Horses, Muscle Spasms

You’re sound asleep or floating in that delicious half dreaming, half aware state of limbo. Suddenly you are jolted awake as a white-hot, searing pain rips through your calf. You scream. You cry. You try to stretch out your leg or you force yourself to stand up and limp around in circles until the pain subsides. Sanity returns as the muscle relaxes and you collapse back into bed. But what caused that muscle to twist itself into a knot?

To relieve a cramp right now, stretch the muscle. The muscle cramping needs to be elongated. A bit of unrefined sea salt under the tongue followed by eating a banana can keep them from coming back for the time being, but if you get muscle cramps regularly it’s time to put a stop to them with a holistic approach that addresses the cause.

Causes of Muscle Cramps

Dehydration, mineral deficiency, or muscle strain are common causes of a muscle spasm also known as a charley horse. Poor circulation, nerve compression, or an adverse reaction to a prescription medication may also be to blame.

How To Avoid Muscle Cramps

Too often we look at one symptom and try to resolve it with medications instead of looking at the body from a holistic viewpoint. If you move away from the conventional medical model and realize that there is one disease – cellular dysfunction with its many symptoms, you will change your

approach to health. You can heal the individual cells through detox, exercise, and nutrition. In other words, give the body what it needs, remove the interfering toxins, and it will heal itself.

Dehydration

Your body needs plenty of pure, clean water each day. The rule of thumb is ½ ounce to 1 ounce per pound. If you weigh 150 lbs., that's 75 to 150 ounces of water per day, roughly half a gallon to a gallon a day. If you weigh 200 lbs, that's 12 .5 to 25 cups of water or ¾ gallon to a 1 ½ gallons a day. Hotter weather and more exercise puts you on the high end of the range, whereas cooler weather and a more sedentary lifestyle lowers your requirements.

Cranberry Lemonade Recipe from *The One Gallon Challenge*

- Glass gallon jar
- Safe, clean, spring water or distilled water
- 1 cup of unsweetened, organic cranberry juice, not from concentrate
- 3 organic fresh lemons
- A citrus juicer
- Liquid stevia
- Liquid cayenne

Fill the jar to about 85% capacity with spring water (or distilled water). Squeeze the lemons and pour the juice into the water. Add cranberry juice. Add stevia to taste and then add cayenne to taste. The amount of cayenne used is up to you, but the more the better.

Nutrition

You can easily increase nutrition through raw fruits and vegetables. Muscle spasms can be caused by low levels of

magnesium, potassium, calcium, and sodium. If you eat a truly healthy diet consisting of 80% fresh, raw, organic produce, you will increase your overall health.

Foods rich in magnesium include pumpkin seeds, spinach, Swiss chard, sesame seeds, quinoa, cashews, black beans, cashews, sunflower seeds, and navy beans.

Foods rich in potassium include beet greens, Lima beans, Swiss chard, bok choy, sweet potato, potatoes, spinach, avocado, pinto beans, and lentils. Of course, bananas are a good source as well, but compare their 422.44 mg of potassium per serving to beet greens at 1,308.96 mg per serving. Greens really pack in nutrients.

Greens alkalinize the body and keep calcium levels up in the body as well. Collared greens, spinach, turnip greens, mustard greens, beet greens, and bok choy are all excellent sources of calcium. Try to eat a large salad every day with lots of greens, plenty of other colors, garlic, cilantro, ginger, and more.

Click here to show our salad recipe

Salad Recipe from *80% Raw Food Diet*

The Salad Base

- Spinach
- Arugula (I prefer baby arugula, mature arugula tastes funky)
- Collard Greens (they’re very bitter; use sparingly)
- Lettuce (mix it up, try an organic spring mix)
- Kale
- Beet greens (the tops of beets)
- Red cabbage (thinly shred like a slaw or a little thicker, depending on the texture you prefer)
- Rainbow chard

Shredded, Grated

- Carrots
- Zucchini
- Beetroot
- Diakon (or other radish)

Chopped or Diced

- Leeks
- Red onions
- Red and yellow bell peppers
- Cucumbers
- Cilantro
- Asparagus (try cooking in a balsamic vinegar first)

Extras

- Pomegranate seeds
- Olives
- Raisins or dried cranberries
- Sesame seeds
- Ground papaya seeds and/or ground pepper
- Avocado
- Eggs (try soft boiled)
- Beans (black, pinto, kidney, green, garbanzo, etc.)
- Garlic
- Turmeric
- Chia seeds

It’s not an exact recipe; the point is to eat a very diverse (and incredibly tasty) salad every day. Personally, I like some balsamic vinegar for my dressing, but there’s a dressing recipe in the *80% Raw Food Diet* article.

Exercise

The body needs exercise to maintain muscle strength and limberness, bone density, lymphatic movement, and blood flow. All are vital for health. In order for the body to dispose of waste and toxins, blood and lymph must move through the tissues. Exercise and massage aid in circulation of blood and lymph.

Chiropractic and Massage

If muscle spasms are a regular occurrence, especially if you maintain a healthy diet and get good exercise, it’s a good idea to check in with your chiropractor, your masseuse, or both, to relieve any impinged nerves that may be contributing to the problem.

Stretch Properly

Lightly stretch after your muscles are warm, and take care not to injure yourself as you build up flexibility. Incorporate Dynamic stretching with your workouts. Dynamic stretching means your body is still continuously moving while you elongate, or stretch, the muscles, like with stiff-legged deadlifts and high kicks. Use static, slow-and-hold stretching to grow and maintain your flexibility after your workout when your muscles are hot, not before when the muscles are cold. Doing static stretches at the end of a workout will help reduce muscle soreness the next day and allow your muscles to heal faster due to the increase in blood flow to the muscles.

Supplementation

Shillington’s Total Nutrition Formula and Sunwarrior’s Liquid Light are excellent for daily supplementation. It’s best not to take potassium or magnesium by themselves unless recommended by a doctor who has verified a deficiency. There

are many good liquid multi-mineral formulas on the market (and a lot of bad ones), but not many great whole-food supplements like Shillington's formula (you can also get the recipe here).

Conclusion

When you embrace a healthy lifestyle and reject processed foods, replacing them with whole healthy foods and an alkaline diet (which is very easy to do with whole foods), and you drink plenty of clean water, exercise, and get good rest, healing begins. Muscle spasms, along with other aches and pains or symptoms attributed to age or other circumstance, simply disappear. If you get cramps in your feet, look into hypothyroidism.

Recommended Reading:

- *Hypertension – How To Lower Your Blood Pressure Quickly and Naturally*
- *Understand Hypothyroidism – Prevention and Natural Remedies*
- *Joint Pain – What Causes it? How to Stop it Naturally*

Recommended Supplements:

- Shillington's Total Nutrition Formula
- Sunwarrior's Liquid Light
- Liquid Magnesium – 8oz • Drs Advantage
- Shillington's Body Balance+
- Magnesium Complex Liquid

Sources:

- *Charley horse* – Medline Plus
- *Water and Your Diet: Staying Slim and Regular With H2O* – Web M.D.
- *Magnesium* – The World's Healthiest Foods
- *Potassium* – The World's Healthiest Foods
- *Calcium* – The World's Healthiest Foods