

Question: What do you think of magnets to relieve pain?

Answer: In a study reported in the July/August issue of *Alternative Therapies*, a peer-reviewed journal of – you guessed it – alternative therapies, magnets were shown to reduce pain in patients suffering from chronic knee pain and dysfunction. The researchers used a double-blind technique, meaning that neither the patients nor the treating therapists knew whether the pads placed on the patients' knees were magnetic or not. Following completion of use and testing, the pads were checked against a code list to determine which were placebos and which were actually magnets. The end result: the magnets appeared to reduce pain AND improve function in affected knee joints. Now, the problem. The researchers can not explain why. Of course, doctors routinely prescribe medications which have been shown to be effective, even though their mechanism of action may be unknown. So, we shouldn't see this as too much of a problem.

Personally, I can say that I was doubtful as to the efficacy of magnets until I wore them myself. I had shattered my collar bone while out body surfing one day (it was bad enough that I had trouble identifying the bone in my own x-rays). I got acupuncture, took herbs, and wore magnets. I would have refused the magnets if I did not already have great respect for the Acupuncture Physician who prescribed them. I took two pain pills the day of the accident, and one the following day, and needed no more. Six weeks later, I was carrying a 60 pound back-pack through the mountains of Montana. I routinely use magnets now in my own practice. I cannot tell you why they work, and have yet to hear a persuasive theory. However, I have not been able to find a single piece of evidence indicating that they are dangerous, unless you have a pacemaker or possibly a mechanical implant. They can't hurt, and they probably help. Good enough for me!