

### Section 2.3.4 Ruta Graveolens [Picture]

*Ruta* (*Common rue* or *Bitterwort*): Has been used medicinally for centuries: toxicologically it is an irritant herb and was once known for having an abortive effect on the uterus.

Homeopathically its greatest affinities are for **tissues which are mechanically functional** but which have a scant internal blood supply ie. tendons, fibrous aponeuroses, cartilage, periosteal tissue and tendon insertions.

Most of the tissues that are relevant for *Ruta*, are points of high **mechanical tension**, where kinetic forces are repeatedly concentrated.

In healthy, measured, activity which is both moderate and varied, these tissues function smoothly and never give the organism problems or the slightest pause for thought.

However, purposeful human activity is often associated with mental drive - a need to get the job done, or perhaps a competitive need to succeed; to achieve a goal faster and better than your opponent. Sometimes people are driven by a need to please an employer or achieve a target.

This means they hammer away at a job continuously, or keep running even when their body has started to complain, or type at a keyboard at full capacity for long periods to keep abreast of their workload.

These kinds of activity involve repetitive movements in the same musculo-skeletal structures. Those structures - which never normally 'complain' when they are intermittently rested, or exposed to variation - become slightly inflamed. In these repetitive strain situations, their serving muscles become stiff and less efficient.

The *Ruta* state tends to be more localised than the remedies we have already discussed in this section. The onset can relate to an **acute sprain or strain**, where the main site of **injury is in a tendon or ligament** (*Rhus toxicodendron* is indicated more specifically for disruption in the musculo-tendonous junction or the body of the muscle itself).

In acute injuries, like sprained ankles for example, *Ruta* can usefully be given in repeated high potencies (typically 30c or 200c, hourly for six hours and 3-4 hourly thereafter, for a couple of days.)

Chronic *Ruta* 'states' tend to have a more insidious pattern of onset. The effects of **repetitive strain is cumulative**. The local inflammation or irritation is not permitted to settle before the next round of activity is undertaken. These cycles of activity are sacrificial and not very sustainable.

*Ruta* in 6x potency can be very helpful in reducing local pain and inflammation and helping to restore tissues to a healthy state. To maintain this improvement, however requires a change in the pattern of activity. Once alerted to the problem, most people seek ways of improving the ergonomics of their work place. They also alter their patterns of work to provide period of rest or, move between activities to create variation in the mechanical demands placed on their tissues. Some patients are willing to undertake Alexander Technique training, which radically improves their insight into the best ways of using their body, for sustainable, efficient movement, through changes of posture and habit.

Some patients experience an '**acute on chronic**' pattern in their symptoms. Young cyclists and gymnasts, for example, can develop **chondromalacia patella**, through repetitive mechanical demands on immature cartilage. In these cases there is a diffuse underlying discomfort, which then flare up acutely with swelling and pain, following exercise or training sessions. These acutes can take 2-3 days to settle on their own. With high potencies of *Ruta* however, there can a reduction of pain and swelling within a couple of hours. Low potencies of *Ruta* can then be used over longer periods to maintain and improve the background condition. Repetitive strain can largely be avoided in young athletes, if they are individually trained in good technique - but this is largely dependent on the skill and wisdom of their individual trainers and coaches!

**Eye strain** in ambitious students, or those cramming for exams, is another situation in which there is persistent tone applied to vulnerable muscles serving avascular tissues (lens). *Ruta* would normally be given in 30c or 200c

potencies before and after each study session. Students should be encouraged to frequently alter their focal distance, by breaking off from their studies and looking out of the window towards 'infinity' ie clouds, stars, distant buildings, or virtual ships on the horizon.

The mind picture of Ruta is not particularly defined by the materia medica. But some mind symptoms might include: ambition, desire to work, competitiveness, frustration, irritability, effects of overwork, dutifulness, tension. Remember however, that Ruta can be used pragmatically on its local indications alone.

Now read the summary provided below, then review the description of *Ruta graveolens* in your course materia medica.

# RUTA SUMMARY

*Ruta Graveolens*

*Common Rue*



- Osteoarthritis of the knee
- Chondromalacia
- Osgood Schlatters disease
- Sport injuries to tendons and ligaments  
(collateral ligament sprains in skiing injuries of the knee)
- Growing pains

Affinity for **cartilages** and **ligaments**, particularly **where they attach to bone**.

Useful where there is a tendency to **contracture**, **cramps** or **dislocation**.

Associated with the large joints **especially the knee**.

Pain feels as though bones were broken, and there is aching or a bruised sensation in the supporting ligaments and tendons.

Associated with **fatigue** and **aching**, particularly **after sprains** and strains. Indicated in repetitive strain injury, and of great value in **sports medicine**.

May be used topically following sprains.

## REFERENCES: journals & periodicals

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*Ruta graveolens*

J Am Inst Homeopath 1970 Jun;63(2): 109-112

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J Am Inst Homeopath 1966 Jul-Aug;59(7-8): 244-245

Clarke JH

The place of homoeopathic remedies in the treatment of malignant disease

*juglans cinaria*, *ruta*, *conium*

Homoeopathic World 1924 Aug;59(704):  
204-207,261-264

Bodman JH

Cancer of the rectum

*carcinosinum*, *ruta*, *ornithogalum umbellatum*

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Cooper LH

Some observations on the medicinal treatment of rectal carcinoma

Homoeopathic World 1909 Aug;44(8): 352-361

Tyler ML

*Ruta graveolens*

Homoeopathy 1936 Jun;5(6): 202-207

Ainsworth MJ

Historical notes on some plants used in homoeopathic medicine:*hypericum*, *ruta*

Homoeopathy 1990 Oct;40(5):135

Gibson DM

*rhustoxicodendron*, *ruta*, *causticum*, drug relationships  
Hahnemannian Gleanings 1976

Without looking at the text, how many of the keynote of Ruta can you remember ?

Mind

General or environmental

Local

Frequent Pathological Indications

Now read Ruta. in your materia medica:

Page 834 Vermeulen

Page 1028 Clarke

Page 559 Boericke (2nd British ed)

page 801 Neatby & Stronham

Page 509 Phatak

Page 350 Jouanny