How to Ease Osteoarthritis Symptoms With Gentle Exercise

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How Exercise for Osteoarthritis May Help Ease Symptoms

Gentle exercise can make a big difference in how you feel if you suffer from osteoarthritis. Exercise improves flexibility, reduces pain, and lowers stress levels. You will feel better all over, have more energy, and sleep better if you engage in a regular exercise program.

How to Get Started With Exercise for Osteoarthritis

Think about the kinds of exercise for OA that you enjoy. If you have not exercised in a while, recall what activities used to be pleasurable for you.

Are there activities you've always wanted to experience that you never had the time to learn? This is a perfect time to embark on a new journey. You will improve your health and have fun too. You may even live longer.

Exercise can be an adventure. It does not need to be a dreaded activity. The most important aspect of beginning an exercise program is simply to start moving. Since exercise is simply movement, the possibilities are endless. Perhaps you've always dreamed of learning how to ballroom dance. Now you can.

Or, have you ever wanted to learn how to play a piano? I bet you never thought of playing an instrument as a form of exercise. It is though. Think about the exercise that your hands and arms will get when you play a tune.

Would you like a new pet? Millions of wonderful pups live in shelters because no one wants them. Consider adopting a new friend and taking your buddy for a walk each day.

However, it's important to remember as you embark on your exercise journey that the adage "no pain, no gain" does not apply to you.

Set Doable Goals for Yourself

Consider your goals, and be specific. What do you want to achieve by exercising? Do you want to experience less pain, feel more energetic, lose weight, or get stronger?

Write down your goals and be sure to chart your progress. By keeping track of your accomplishments, you will be able to urge yourself forward if you have days when you can't be bothered with exercise.

While keeping with your program is very important, do not get discouraged if you miss a day or two of exercise occasionally. Simply start over. Hopefully, your exercise routine will be so much fun that you won't dream of missing it.

Where to Exercise

Do you prefer to exercise alone or with a friend? Do you like the energetic atmosphere of a gym where you can meet with a trainer? Would you prefer taking walks with your friend so that you can catch up on the latest news while you get healthy?

Do you think that a yoga class would benefit your mind, body, and spirit? Would a dance class add romance to you and your partner's life? Perhaps you prefer a peaceful, solitary kayak ride so that you can commune with nature. Choose where you like to exercise and the types of activities which are most nourishing for you.

Next page: The best exercise for osteoarthritis and more.

The Best Kinds of Exercise for Osteoarthritis Patients

The best exercise program is one you enjoy and can do regularly. Check with your health care provider for specific advice. Be sure to begin slowly. You will be amazed at how quickly your ability to exercise with greater ease occurs.

Warm up for several minutes before engaging in vigorous activity and have a cool down period when you are through. If you experience pain, cut back on your exercise program a bit and apply warm or cold packs to the affected area.

Isometric exercises and swimming are among the best kinds of exercises you can engage in because they do not jar your joints. They tone the tissues surrounding your joints and have a low risk of causing injury. By having healthier tissues surrounding your joints, you will experience less pain and swelling.

Water Play is Great Exercise

Swimming provides a great full body workout. If you do not like to swim but want to reap the benefits of water therapy, consider doing a water exercise program. You can do water aerobics without injuring yourself.

Try walking in water. When you are in the water, pay special attention to how moving in water makes you feel. You may need not to follow a specific routine. Simply move around, Stretch your joints and try to move all of the muscles of your body.

Walking and Yoga

Walking is a good activity if you have osteoarthritis. It can help you to lose weight and it improves the function of your entire body. Do not engage in running or jogging as they are too jarring to your joints.

Yoga can help you to relax while providing an excellent whole body workout. You may attend a class, purchase a DVD, or follow along with instructors on YouTube. Yoga has been subjected to many scientific studies, which have found it helpful for reducing the pain and stiffness due to arthritis.

Maintaining a Healthy Weight

Excess weight puts pressure on your joints. The joints in your back, knees, hips, and feet will benefit if you take off a few pounds. You may even save yourself from having to undergo joint replacement surgery in the future.

If you already have an artificial hip or knee, maintaining a healthy weight will extend the life of your artificial joint. Combine your exercise program with a healthy diet for maximum benefit. Swimming, dancing, and walking are aerobic activities, which will help you to lose weight while protecting your joints from injury.

Are You Chair Bound?

If you need a wheelchair or if you have a job which requires that you sit a great deal of the day, it is very important that you exercise. Exercise helps your joints to stay hydrated and increases circulation. It prevents complications that arise from immobility. Some complications of immobility are increased pain, stiffness, and a risk of blood clot formation.

Do isometric exercises a couple of times each hour. Simply tighten, hold, and relax muscles. Begin at your feet and work upwards. In addition to the physical benefits, progressive muscle relaxation will reduce your level of stress.

Change your position frequently. Take deep breaths. Extend your arms and legs regularly. Consider keeping some light weights close at hand. You could lift a soup can or book repeatedly for a good workout. Make big circles with your arms. Stretch slowly and deeply while you feel the movement.

Make Your Exercise Program Even Better

Consider combining your exercise program with other treatments that enhance joint health. Reward yourself with a massage after your workout. Enjoy time in a sauna or hot tub after your workout.

Mix a couple of drops of peppermint or rosemary oil in a base oil, such as canola, sesame, sweet almond or grapeseed oil. Apply it to your joints before and after exercising. These natural pain relief remedies are energizing and improve the blood flow to your joints. Essential oils of ginger, birch, and black pepper can be added to massage oils to provide relief to joints that are sore.

Conclusion

Talk to your health care provider about any restrictions they recommend, and then make a list of potentially enjoyable activities. Set goals for yourself. Then, get started on your new, exciting exercise program. Within a few weeks you will feel better about yourself, have more energy, less pain, be more flexible, and experience more joy in your life. Have fun!