



How to Keep Mobile Despite Osteoarthritis Knee Pain

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9 Tips for Keeping Mobile Despite Osteoarthritis of the Knee

Knee osteoarthritis is one of the most common types of osteoarthritis (OA). While it can progress slowly and is manageable with the proper diet and exercise, there will come a time when the cartilage wears away enough so the knee joint is bone on bone, requiring surgery.

As the osteoarthritis worsens, it can become harder and more uncomfortable to stay mobile because of pain and stiffness in the joint. While activities such as tennis and basketball are possible in the earlier stages, as knee osteoarthritis progresses and damages more of the joint, high-impact activities become less enjoyable and more painful.

Despite the limitations of knee osteoarthritis, it is possible to maintain some degree of mobility. It's important to adjust the types of movements that are done as the osteoarthritis progresses so the knee does not become more aggravated.

Here are nine tips for keeping mobile despite having knee osteoarthritis.

Weight Loss

Weight loss helps maintain mobility because with less weight for the knee joint to carry, the less painful it is to move.

For every pound you gain, that's equivalent to an additional four pounds on each knee. So if you are just five pounds overweight, that's an additional 20 pounds of stress on an arthritic knee with every step taken.

This is because the force across the knees is about three to six times the body weight, therefore people who have more mass cause greater force on their knees, leading to a faster progression of OA.

Studies have also shown that weight loss allows for improved walking speeds, which in turn helps people exercise more often and for longer periods of time.

Assisted Walking Devices

As knee osteoarthritis progresses, stability can become an issue. To allow for added stability, you can opt to use canes, knee braces, or cushioned shoes.

Depending on the severity of the OA, these assisted walking devices can allow you to remain mobile, even if in a limited capacity.

Cardiovascular Exercises

Cardiovascular exercises not only allow for the knee to keep moving and maintain its strength, but it's a great way to help with weight loss.

Exercises such as biking, running, swimming, and using an elliptical machine are all excellent options, depending on the severity of osteoarthritis. When exercising, it's important to know your limits and not overdo any exercises, which would lead to more knee pain.

Water Therapy

When knee osteoarthritis is too severe for the exercises like those mentioned above, water therapy is an excellent option.

Water therapy has a few advantages to help with exercising when there are not many options left.

First, buoyancy from the water helps with reducing pressure on the knee joints. Second is that the water provides some resistance, allowing for muscle development as well.

Together, buoyance and resistance require the muscles to work harder without adding unnecessary pressure and stress to an already weakened joint.

Chair Yoga

Like water therapy, chair yoga is also a great alternative in severe cases of osteoarthritis that allows for movement without added stress to the joint. Chair yoga can be done sitting in a chair or standing and holding the chair for support.

Recent research has shown that 45 minutes of chair yoga, twice a week for eight weeks, helps to reduce pain and fatigue, and allows for improved gait and functional ability.

Balancing Exercises

As osteoarthritis gets worse, your ability to balance tends to become worse. Balancing exercise, such as standing on one leg at a time, is a great way to develop better stability and strengthen the knee that has been damaged by the effects of OA.

Tai Chi, for example, helps with pain relief, reduces stress, and develops balance. The balancing exercises incorporated into Tai Chi increase the joints' muscles and improve flexibility, which allow for better blood and joint fluid circulation.

Finally, Tai Chi helps the mind relax, helping with relieve stress and mood swings. And when people feel better, they tend to be more active!

Lower Body Stretching

Stretches that focus on the tissue around and supporting the knees are a great way to relieve pain, stiffness, and other symptoms that go along with knee osteoarthritis. Stretching is also a great way to build strength around the knee for added stability in joints weakened by OA.

Some common stretches include standing quadriceps stretches, standing calf stretches, hamstring stretches, seated leg raises, leg extensions, and step-ups.

Creating a Routine

Developing a workout routine helps to ensure exercises are done regularly. A workout routine doesn't have to

include the same exercises each time, but it's important that some types exercises are done with consistency and regularity.

If not, the joint can become stiffer, and when exercising resumes, it's much harder to regain the flexibility and strength.

To maintain a routine, consider doing stretches in the morning to allow for the body to get limber and moving right away. And if your day gets busier than expected, then there is no need to worry about making time to stretch.

Keep It Simple

Keeping the exercises simple allow you to focus on maintaining the knees' health and not put more added stress on them. It can be easy to overdo some exercises or stretches, but by keeping them simple and within your comfort level, you're less likely to aggravate the knee joint.

With knee osteoarthritis, it's important stay mobile while not putting more stress on the joint. Staying mobile not only helps with managing osteoarthritis, but improves mood and quality of life as well.

It's important to remember that not only remaining active and mobile is key to managing knee osteoarthritis, but also the types of movements are important too. Low-impact exercises that focus on building strength, flexibility and improve stability allow for continued mobility while living with knee osteoarthritis.