

ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN



MAY 2017

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: EXERCISING WITH OSTEOARTHRITIS



Did you know that physical activity is the best non-drug treatment for improving pain and function? Many people are worried that being active could cause more pain or even add to the injured joint. Research actually shows that not only can people who have osteoarthritis be active, but that it is important to be active. Remember that before you start any activities you should talk with your healthcare provider about being active with osteoarthritis, specifically, what activities are best for you.

Three types of activities are important for people with osteoarthritis: flexibility, endurance and strengthening activities.

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- **Flexibility:** Flexibility activities are also called range of motion activities. Range of motion or flexibility is the ability of your joint to move through all of the motions that they were designed to do. For many people with osteoarthritis, the joint has pain and stiffness which make is hard to move. By doing gentle stretching and movements that use the full range of motion, you can help keep your flexibility. For some, this type of activity could improve their flexibility in the joint. If you are unsure what your range of motion is, talk to your healthcare provider.

- **Endurance:** These types of activities are also known as aerobic or cardio activities. These are important for strengthening your heart muscles. It is Recommendations are that you should do endurance activities 150 minutes a week.

This breaks down into 30 minutes a day for 5 days a week. Contact your healthcare provider to discuss which types of endurance activities would be best for you.

- **Strengthening:** When you do activities that improve the strength of your muscles, your muscles can better support your joints. This can be important, especially for joints that are affected by arthritis.

Stress can also affect osteoarthritis. When a body is stressed, it becomes tense. This tenseness can increase pain and limit your ability to move your joints. By not moving your joints, you may

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experience further pain and stress, creating a cycle. Physical activity is not only good for your body, but research has also shown that physical activity can help reduce stress.

Being physically active can be an effective non-drug treatment for persons affected by osteoarthritis. When thinking about starting some regular physical activity, first talk with your healthcare provider to make sure that you do not have any limitations.

SOURCE:

Arthritis Foundation. <http://www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/exercise/benefits>

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