

Exercising with Osteoarthritis

Exercise is safe for almost everyone. In fact, studies show that people with osteoarthritis benefit from regular exercise and physical activity.

For people with osteoarthritis, regular exercise can help:

- Maintain healthy and strong muscles
- Preserve joint mobility
- Maintain range of motion
- Improve sleep
- Reduce pain
- Keep a positive attitude
- Maintain a healthy body weight

Three types of exercise are best if you have osteoarthritis:

Flexibility exercises can help keep joints moving, relieve stiffness, and give you more freedom of movement for everyday activities. Examples of flexibility exercises include upper- and lower-body stretching, yoga, and tai chi.

Strengthening exercises will help you maintain or add to your muscle strength. Strong muscles support and protect joints. Weight-bearing exercises, such as weight lifting, fall into this category. You can use bottles of water or soup cans if you don't have weights.

Endurance exercises make the heart and arteries healthier and may lessen swelling in some joints. Try low-impact options such as swimming and biking.

Before beginning any exercise program, talk with your health care provider about the best activities for you to try.



Quick Tip

You may need to avoid some types of activity when joints are swollen or inflamed. If you have pain in a specific joint area, for example, you may need to focus on another area for a day or two.

VISIT

www.nia.nih.gov/Go4Life

- Read more tips for adding physical activity to your day.
- Print useful tools.
- Order a free exercise DVD.
- Share your exercise story.



National Institute on Aging

National Institutes of Health

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

Go4Life is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.