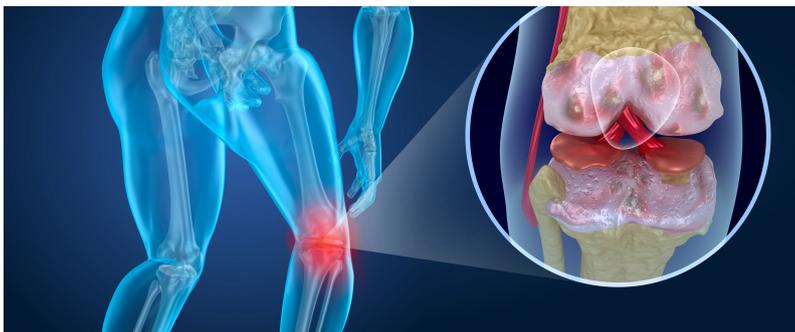


# THE DAILY MOVEMENT

THE RIGHT EXERCISE ADVICE, FROM THE EXPERTS

## EXERCISE FOR OSTEOARTHRITIS

MATTHEW DONOVAN, AEP



Arthritis Australia has recently cited exercise as the most important recommendation for those people managing osteoarthritis. You may be thinking 'but what about my arthritis? My joints do not feel like they are up for any exercise. Surely this will make them hurt even more!?' In the context of exercising with arthritis, there are certain types of exercise that reign supreme and others which may be more provocative. How arthritis affects you is likely different to someone else. The trick is to go through the process of finding out what works best for you rather than avoiding exercise all together. It is reassuring that there is no evidence that exercise makes arthritis worse, or accelerates joint degeneration. There is evidence however, that the opposite is true; that exercise can preserve our joints.

How exactly can exercise help you?

1. Improve joint stiffness
2. Improve or maintain strength around the joint, creating more stability and protection
3. Prevent functional decline
4. Improve your quality of life

For best results exercise should be individualised to you, accounting for your history, age, strength, mobility, comorbidities and interests.

In this issue of The Daily Movement, we delve deeper into the types of exercise that are most effective and why, plus some helpful tips to get you going.

### DID YOU KNOW??

Osteoarthritis can cause or lead to pain, stiffness, swelling, joint instability and muscle weakness, all of which can lead to impaired physical function and reduced quality of life.

Regular exercise can help with these impairments. All of our joints have a membrane surrounding them and regular exercise can help by promoting fluid to lubricate the joint and allow smoother movements. Another benefit is increased blood supply to the joints allowing nutrients to enter promoting repair to damaged tissue while also removing waste products.

### TRUE OR FALSE?

- 1 Osteoarthritis only occurs in the knees and hips.
- 2 Osteoarthritis is a change in the cartilage of the joint.
- 3 More than half of people with osteoarthritis do not achieve recommended levels of moderate physical activity.

TURN OVER TO FIND  
OUT THE ANSWERS



Get started now  
0435 088 559



## WHAT EXERCISE AND WHY

As a guide, you should be aiming to achieve 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity aerobic activity to maintain a good level of fitness. Flexibility training is beneficial as tissues around the joints become stiffer. It is recommended to stretch 3-5 times per week through as much range as possible without provoking pain. People with osteoarthritis also respond well to appropriate resistance training. It is usually recommended to begin with isometric exercises, which involves working the muscles without moving them through range, before progressing to more dynamic strengthening exercises. The goal is to reach 3, 45-60 minute sessions per week.

### Resistance Training



Resistance training involves activities like lifting weights or using your own body weight as leverage to stress your muscles.

### Aerobic Training



This is the type of exercise that will get you huffing and puffing. Think things such as a brisk walk and cycling

### Flexibility training



Refers to stretching, these movements can be both static or movement based. This helps keep our joints moving as they should.



## YOUR CHECKLIST FOR A PERFECT LIFESTYLE AND EXERCISE PLAN

- Aim to perform a total of 150 mins of exercise per week.
- Incorporate resistance training and aerobic exercise into an exercise plan
- Aim to stretch for 15 minutes each day.
- Form a weekly plan of WHEN and WHAT exercise will occur.
- No more than 2 consecutive days without exercise.
- If further guidance is needed or you are not seeing the results you expect, see an Accredited Exercise Physiologist for expert advice.

## TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

- ✓ Start small and build up. Rome wasn't built in a day, much like your OA didn't develop overnight. By making small changes and incorporating regular, purposeful movement into your daily routine, you will reap the benefits for years to come.
- ✓ Create goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely.
- ✓ Find the best time of day. If you are stiff in the mornings, this may be a better time to stretch rather than exercise.
- ✓ It's not all about the exercise. Managing your arthritis is about improving your general health too. That means eating better, limiting alcohol and reducing your weight if needed.



## TRUE OR FALSE ?

- 1 **False.** It is true that the knees, followed by the hips, are the most commonly affected weight-bearing joints. However, osteoarthritis also commonly occurs in the spine, feet, shoulders and hands.
- 2 **False.** While osteoarthritis certainly involves the cartilage, it actually has effects on the whole joint. Other things that are changed include the bone, ligaments and muscles.
- 3 **True.** Research by Farr (2008) found that only 30% of people with osteoarthritis reached physical activity guidelines. As one of the main risk factors associated with osteoarthritis is excessive weight, increasing your activity levels and performing deliberate exercise can have great improvements in your function.