

Exercise Tips for Osteoarthritis

Decrease the stress on your joints

- Break up your activity into smaller amounts of time, e.g. three 10-minute walks rather than one 30-minute walk
- Choose activities that are easier on your joints, e.g. water exercises, cycling and walking with poles
- Wear shoes with good support
- Start with what you know you can do with no pain. Slowly add more activity.

Keep your joints moving

- Move your joint through its range of motion daily
- Stretch tight muscles, holding the stretch for 20 – 30 seconds. Repeat several times throughout the day.

Strengthen the muscles around your sore joints

- Use gravity, tubing or weights for resistance
- Aim for 8 repetitions of an exercise and set goals to slowly increase to 15-20 repetitions, 1-2 times per day. Breathe and control your movements. Your muscle should feel tired by the last movement.
- Try 2-3 strengthening sessions per week. Take a day off after strengthening.
- Do not progress too quickly; make your activity harder every 2 weeks if it is going well.

Follow the 2 hour pain rule

- If you have joint pain more than 2 hours after exercise, you have done too much. Keep a record and stay active but do less the next time you exercise.

Remember to . . .

- Warm up before exercise and cool down afterwards
- Consult a physiotherapist for specific exercise advice
- Have fun! Choose activities you enjoy, exercise with a friend or join an exercise class.

Did you know . . . ?

- You should be active for 2.5 hours every week
- You should aim for 10 min of activity at a time
- During activity you want to feel that you are breathing harder and your heart rate is increasing
- For best health, you should be active every day!

Source: Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines, www.csep.ca

