

## Osteoarthritis - Protecting the Joints in Your Legs and Feet

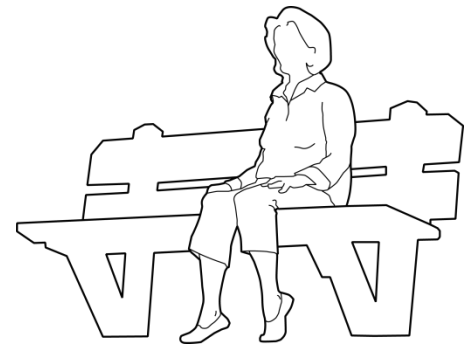
### Protecting your joints is important to:

- Reduce joint stress and pain
- Make your daily activities easier to do
- Prevent damage to your joints

### How to Protect your Joints:

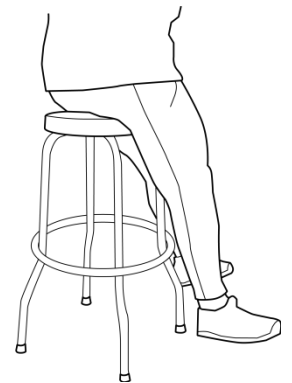
#### 1. Plan ahead

- Plan walks for places where there are benches to sit. Try to rest before your joints hurt.
- Alternate physical activities with rest. Spread out hard tasks over several days, e.g. yard work, housework.
- Take short rest breaks during an activity. Use a timer as a reminder to take a break.
- Use a journal to keep track of how much of an activity you can do comfortably. Planning ahead for rest breaks can help.

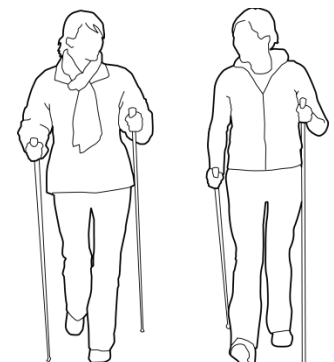


#### 2. Reduce the weight on your joints

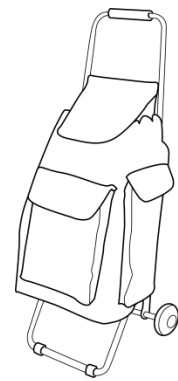
- Do not stay in one position for a long period of time.
- Sit to do activities instead of standing, e.g. ironing, gardening, and preparing meals.
- Avoid heavy lifting and carrying. Use light-weight tools, e.g. vacuum.
- Keep your body at a healthy weight by eating a balanced diet and doing regular exercise.



Activity:	Try:
Walking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Use a walking aid to reduce the stress on your joints, e.g. cane, walker, crutches, or walking poles</li> <li>→ Wear shock absorbing shoes. Try gel or silicone insoles.</li> <li>→ If your balance isn't a problem, walk on grass or other soft surfaces</li> </ul>

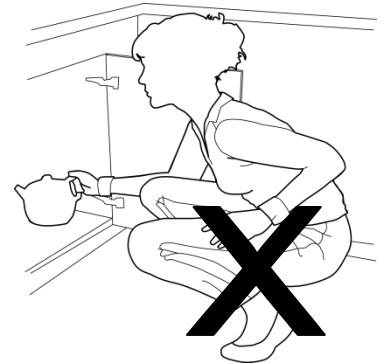


Activity:	Try:
Grocery shopping, work, running errands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Use a cart instead of a basket, inside the store</li> <li>➔ Use a wheeled shopping cart to get items home</li> <li>➔ Use a wheeled backpack or laptop case</li> <li>➔ Go through your bag or purse and take out anything you don't need on a daily basis</li> </ul>

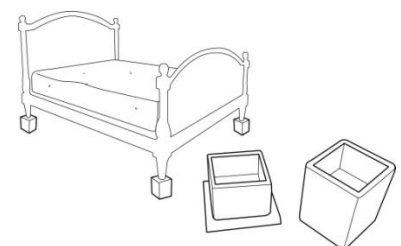


### 3. Keep your joints in a safe or neutral position.

- Avoid squatting, kneeling or twisting.
- Avoid low seats.
- Change the way your home is set up; items that you use every day should be stored near waist height or in easy reach.
- Use long handled tools, e.g. long-handled reacher, shoehorn.

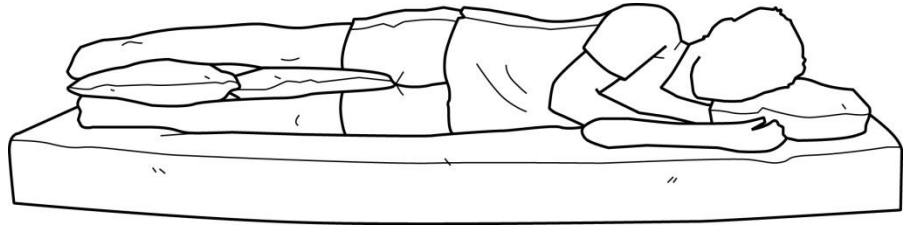


Activity:	Try:
Standing up from a seated position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Use higher chairs or a firm cushion to raise the height of chairs, sofas, and car seats</li> <li>➔ Use a chair with armrests so that you can use your arms to push up from the chair</li> <li>➔ To stand, shift to the edge of the seat, place your sore leg straight out in front of the other and push up with your arms</li> </ul>
Going to the toilet	➔ Use a raised toilet seat with armrests or install a grab bar next to the toilet
Climbing stairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Avoid climbing stairs when possible</li> <li>➔ If you have to take the stairs, use the handrail and/or a cane and take one step at a time</li> <li>➔ Go up the stairs leading with your “good” leg and go down the stairs leading with your “bad” leg</li> </ul>
Getting out of bed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Raise your bed by putting bed blocks under the legs</li> <li>➔ Doing gentle movement exercises before you get out of bed can help reduce stiffness</li> </ul>
Cleaning	➔ Use long-handled tools.



#### 4. Reduce stress on your joints while sleeping

- Sleep on a firm mattress. Add a piece of foam or sheepskin on top of your mattress if you want more cushioning.
- When lying on your side, use a pillow between your legs. This helps to support your hips and low back in a good position.

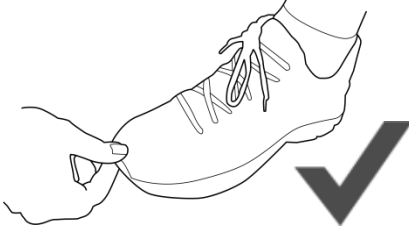
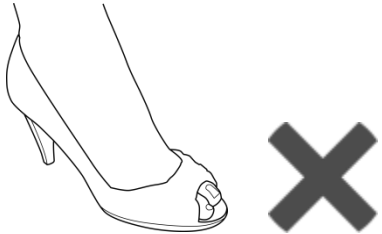
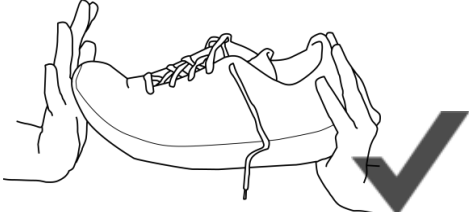



#### 5. Follow the exercises given to you by your health care team to keep your joints moving and your muscles strong.

**Listen to your body** – if you have bad arthritis, it can be normal for more activity to cause a small increase in joint pain. If the pain doesn't go away within 2 hours of stopping the activity, it means you have done too much. Don't stop being active entirely, just do a little less next time or change the way you do the activity.

#### 6. Choose comfort shoes

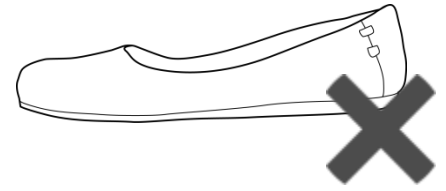
- Look for these things when buying new shoes:

	GOOD: ✓	BAD: ✗
→ Space for your foot - your toes should not be squeezed or touch the end of the shoe as you walk		
→ Stiff sole		

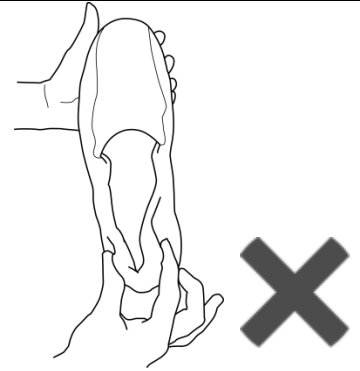
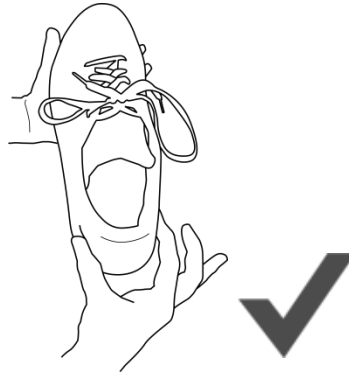
**GOOD: ✓**

**BAD: ✗**

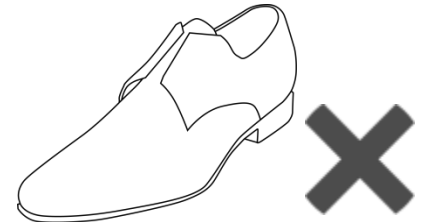
- Rocker sole
- If your balance is poor, talk to your health care team for advice



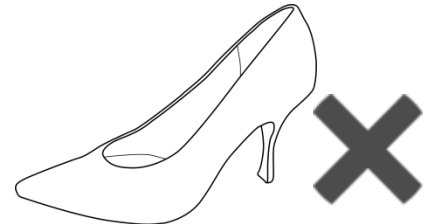
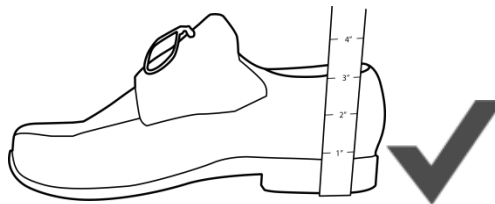
- Firm heel cup that keeps your heel in place



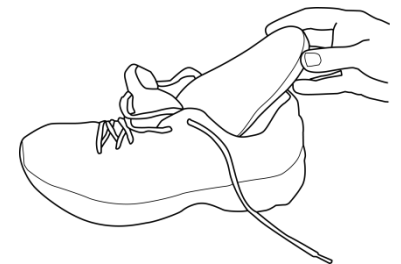
- Soft, comfortable material on the top of the shoe



- Low heel height of 3/4" – 1"



- Soft, comfortable insole. If you wear orthotics, look for shoes that come with a removable insole. An extra gel or foam insole can help to absorb shock in regular dress shoes.



- Replace shoes at least once a year, more often if you wear them regularly.
- Wear comfort shoes indoors if you are doing a lot of standing and walking.

Your Occupational Therapist also recommends: \_\_\_\_\_

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