

Exercise Is Essential for Osteoarthritis

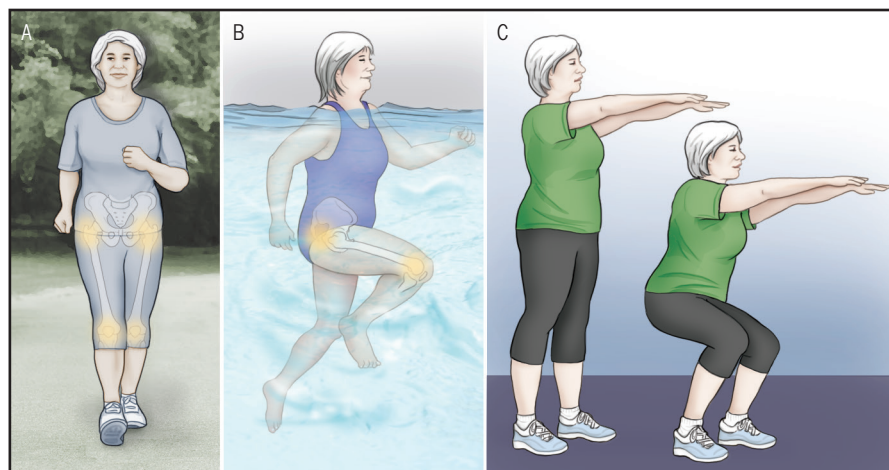
The Many Benefits of Physical Activity

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You may have heard the phrase “exercise is medicine.” This may seem like a paradox, but for people with hip and knee osteoarthritis (OA), many high-quality research studies show that exercise therapy is very helpful in decreasing pain and improving joint motion. Physical activity and exercise also help prevent cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, dementia, and many other health conditions. In fact, the right amount of physical activity has been shown to avert

35 health conditions and treat 26 chronic health conditions.

If you have hip and knee OA, you might not be getting enough physical activity and exercise throughout the day to stay healthy. A commentary published in the June 2018 issue of *JOSPT* highlights the importance of learning about the benefits of physical activity and exercise for improving your OA pain and preventing other chronic health conditions that often develop in those diagnosed with hip or knee OA.



STAY ACTIVE AND EXERCISE. If you have hip or knee osteoarthritis, exercise and physical activity may not only help improve your joint pain but can also boost your overall health and quality of life. Physical activity can be as simple as walking (A), biking, or water exercises (B). Strength training is critical to improving your function (C). Consult your physical therapist to design the right program for you.

This *JOSPT Perspectives for Patients* is based on an article by Skou et al, titled “Physical Activity and Exercise Therapy Benefit More Than Just Symptoms and Impairments in People With Hip and Knee Osteoarthritis” (*J Orthop Sports Phys Ther* 2018;48(6):439-447. doi:10.2519/jospt.2018.7877).

This Perspectives article was written by a team of *JOSPT*'s editorial board and staff. Deydre S. Teyhen, PT, PhD, Editor, and Jeanne Robertson, Illustrator.

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NEW INSIGHTS

The commentary's authors summarized 96 articles to best describe the benefits of exercise for those with hip and knee OA. The researchers reviewed the benefits of physical activity and exercise and how they often result in better outcomes than medications, injections, and surgery. The commentary specifically highlights the positive effects of exercise therapy in treating the symptoms of OA and discusses the “dose” (frequency, duration, and intensity) of supervised therapy and home exercises. Finally, the authors reviewed the evidence favoring physical activity for your overall health, including your heart, pancreas, and brain.

PRACTICAL ADVICE

The authors offer 7 key recommendations. (1) Exercise and physical activity should be tailored to your needs and preferences. (2) Consider water exercises if it is too painful to exercise on land. (3) Supervised exercise therapy over a 6-week period is often helpful to get you started. (4) Some people may need 12 weeks of supervised therapy to begin. (5) After you complete supervised therapy, you may need periodic “booster sessions” to help with long-term management of your OA pain and overall health. (6) Home exercises should be performed to optimize your outcomes. (7) You should be sure you understand how to manage flare-ups in pain and how to modify your exercises when pain increases.

The benefits of exercise and physical activity are numerous: they help fight cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and osteoporosis, and improve your mental health. Your physical therapist can help design the right program for you.



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