

MANAGING OSTEOARTHRITIS

Background:

Osteoarthritis (OA) is a common condition that can best be described as a stiff and painful joint. The causes of this condition are many and we usually can't give you just one reason for why it's happening; that said, genetics, old injuries, and some diseases can all play a role.

When an x-ray or MRI shows Osteoarthritis, it's not necessarily unusual or a problem. In fact, it might not even be causing any pain at all. Every single person develops osteoarthritis as they age, and in the vast majority of cases there's zero pain. An accurate way to think of OA is like wrinkles and grey hair on the inside of your body.

Fortunately, when OA is causing pain, there are many options to decrease your discomfort and improve mobility. Importantly, know that a diagnosis of Osteoarthritis doesn't mean that you are doomed to suffer with ongoing pain.

Facts:

Diagnoses such as osteoarthritis and its aliases (spondylosis, spondylitis, wear & tear, and degenerative joint disease) are rather scary sounding, but remember that they aren't representative of what's going on. Just a few more internal grey hairs sprouting up.

Your general health impacts your body's ability to deal with pain. The healthier you are, the happier your joints.

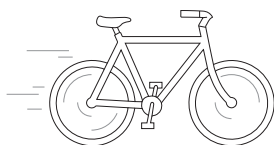
Canadian and International agencies all agree on a number of non-pharmacological and pharmacological interventions. These include:

1. Land-based exercise, strength training, water-based exercise, self-management and education.
2. Weight management: 5% weight loss within a 20-week period is effective for knee OA.
3. Topical NSAIDs (Voltaren, Diclofenac Gel, etc) are recommended as appropriate for all patients with many types of OA and in a scientific review, were found overall to be safer and better tolerated compared to the NSAIDs (Aspirin, Advil, Motrin, etc) that you ingest.

What you can do:

1. Educate yourself and understand that OA is a description not a cause.
2. Action needs to be taken but stay positive - each case is unique and solutions are available.
3. Movement and exercise are among the best treatments for joint pain. Gradually return to activity and experiment to find the right type and amount of activity.
4. Work with an MD, Physiotherapist or Nutritionist to ensure your diet is healthy and you are maintaining a healthy weight.

Exercises:



1. Try biking, rowing, walking, or water based aerobics. Decide which exercises your body responds to the best.



2. Rhythmical range of motion movements in a relatively comfortable position.



3. Have a Physiotherapist create a strength training program.

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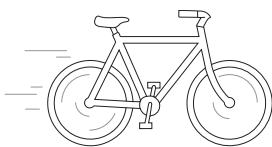
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