

MANAGING ARTHRITIS THROUGH LIFESTYLE MODIFICATIONS

In partnership with POTENTRx

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What is Arthritis?

Arthritis is a term for over 100 different conditions that have to do with joint pain or disease. There are two types of arthritis that are most common in adults: osteoarthritis, which occurs from the progressive breakdown of cartilage within joints that causes the bones to rub together leading to stiffness, pain, and loss of range of movement, and rheumatoid arthritis, which occurs when the body's immune cells mistakenly attack your joints causing inflammation, pain, fatigue, and warm and red joints. Rheumatoid arthritis can damage joints and organs such as the heart.

Know Your Facts!

Q: Who is at risk for arthritis?

A: Arthritis can affect people of any age, race, or gender. However, there are almost three times as many females with rheumatoid arthritis than males.

Q: Is arthritis only a disease of old age?

A: No, arthritis can affect children and adults. Two thirds of those with arthritis are under the age of 65.

Q: Are there any ways to cure osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis?

A: There are no known cures for osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis, but there are several options for treatment available ranging from surgery to pain medication.

Q: Should I avoid exercise because of my arthritis?

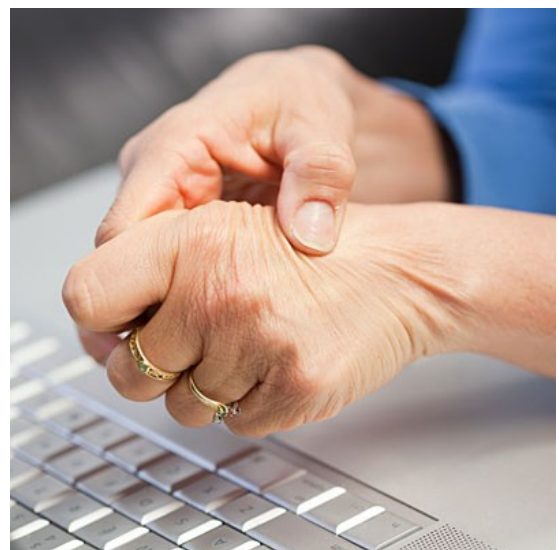
A: No! Although movement can cause pain or discomfort of joints affected by arthritis, there is evidence that exercise can be used as a tool to manage arthritic symptoms.

Q: Is there anything I can do to control my arthritis aside from taking medication?

A: Yes! There are modifiable risk factors that contribute to arthritis. Please refer to the reverse side for lifestyle changes that can help to relieve symptoms of arthritis.

Arthritis is the leading cause of disability in the United States, leading to more activity limitation than heart disease, cancer or diabetes.

Arthritis.org





Factors of Arthritis

There is no one, definite cause of arthritis, but the following are known to increase risk for arthritis:

Modifiable Risk Factors

Overweight, lack of exercise, and diet.

Non-Modifiable Risk Factors

Genetics, increasing age, and previous joint injury.

What Can Exercise Do For Arthritis?

Exercise can be beneficial to those experiencing arthritis as exercise may reduce pain and swelling, increase various joints' range of motion, and increase the strength of the muscles around various joints. Increasing the strength of the muscles around joints with resistance training can help relieve some of the stress experienced by the joints. Aerobic activities such as walking, swimming, or biking are good exercises for those with arthritis because they are considered "non impact" and less stressful on joints than other types of exercises. General exercise guidelines advise individuals to exercise 5 times a week for 30 minutes at a moderate intensity, or 3 times a week for 20 minutes at a more vigorous intensity. Alternatively, individuals can use an equivalent combination of the two intensity recommendations.

What Can Lifestyle Changes Do For Arthritis?

There are many proven and recommended lifestyle changes to manage arthritis symptoms — regular exercise, a healthy diet and taking care of your joints are some lifestyle changes that can be beneficial to those with arthritis. Regular exercise will alleviate some symptoms of arthritis like pain, stiffness, and swelling. Another benefit of exercise is that it can help you lose weight; any amount of weight lost will relieve stress on the knees, hips, and lower back, all of which carry the load of our bodies each and every day. A healthy diet, like the Mediterranean which promotes non-processed foods, low amounts of saturated fats, fish (for omega-3 fatty acids), fruits, vegetables, nuts, and beans, can help reduce inflammation, as well as promote a healthy heart. You can find helpful tips on taking care of your joints at arthritis.org, where you can also educate yourself on the many types of arthritis and how to manage each of them.

