

## Exercise, Arthritis and Diabetes

Although physical activity can potentially reduce the symptoms of arthritis, research suggests that over half of the people with arthritis of the hip and knee are not participating in adequate physical activity. If that is the case, then one may ask which types of exercise intervention are the most effective in relieving pain and improving function in people with hip and knee osteoarthritis? In addition to the specific types of activities, several other factors need to be considered as well. For example, individual experiences and attitudes toward exercise must be accounted for. Everyone has a different level of social support and has likely received some sort of advice from a health care professional.

Current international guidelines recommend therapeutic exercise (land or water based) are a central part of an effective management strategy of osteoarthritis. Research from studying patients attempting to manage their hip and knee osteoarthritis has demonstrated that exercise interventions that are able to combine strengthening exercises with flexibility and aerobic exercise are most likely to improve outcomes of pain and function.

We must also consider that positive physical activity experiences are recognized predictors of increased physical activity among people with arthritis. It is important that whichever activity is chosen, this activity needs to be the most likely to result in an overall positive experience. Improved physical activity confidence and social support are also associated with increased physical activity. Participating in these activities with someone who has a similar motivation will help to keep you involved and interested. It is important to consider these contributing factors when planning physical activity strategies for people with arthritis.

Increasing your activity will not only help your pain from arthritis but if you have diabetes improving your blood sugar control can help your joints as well as the rest of your health. Osteoarthritis and type 2 diabetes mellitus often coexist in older adults. Those with diabetes are more susceptible to developing arthritis, which has been traditionally attributed to common risk factors, namely, age and obesity. Alterations in lipid metabolism and hyperglycemia (high blood sugar) might directly impact the health of the cartilage and the bone that supports the joint surface, contributing to the development/progression of arthritis. In order for individuals who may have both conditions to adequately manage these issues they must have an understanding of the associated risk factors so that they may use this information to discuss options with their health care providers. The emerging links between diabetes and arthritis further emphasizes the importance of physical activity and the implications of safe and effective physical activity on your overall health and well-being.

There is plenty of scientific evidence that has accumulated to show significant benefit of exercise over no exercise. An approach combining exercises to increase strength, flexibility, and aerobic capacity is most likely to be effective for relieving pain, improving function, and keeping you healthy.

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