

EXERCISE

Important for Managing Osteoarthritis

Exercise, as a key treatment option for osteoarthritis (OA), not only will help in weight management but it also protects the joints by lubricating the joints and strengthening the muscles around them. Stronger muscles will absorb the extra force that joints normally would take.

Being overweight is unhealthy and it is one of the main risk factors for developing OA. The excess weight puts increased strains on joints, especially in the knees or hips. Thus, a small reduction in weight can make a big difference in OA symptoms such as joint pain, joint stiffness and loss of range of movement. It is recommended for overweighted OA people to reduce their weight via dietary changes and lifestyle modification, which includes an increase in physical activity and exercise.

Not all the activities are suitable for OA patients. OA patients should choose low-impact and moderate-intensity exercises that will not put too much strains on the joints. There are few types of exercise that are important for OA patients. These include:

Aerobic Exercise

Aerobic exercise is any conditioning exercise that raises heart rate above normal resting rate. Aerobic exercise will build up energy level, exercise your joints and muscles as well as benefit on weight management. It is recommended to perform aerobic exercise for 150 minutes per week, or ideally 30 minutes per day. The choices of aerobic exercise include dancing, swimming, tai chi, yoga, treadmill, bicycling and jogging.

Stretching and Flexibility Exercise

Stretching and flexibility exercise aim to improve range of movement of joints. Stretching muscle with static or dynamic stretches include gentle stretching and movement that takes joints through full span after exercise will improve the flexibility and retain the range of motions.

Balance Activity

Balance activity is designed for those OA people who is struggling with deteriorate balance. Maintaining balance is especially important for older people, as sustaining a fall may lead to a severe injury. It is recommended to incorporate balance activities into exercise plan for at least twice per week. Those activities that can improve balance include standing on one foot, standing on balance boards or balls, tai chi and yoga.

Strengthening Activity

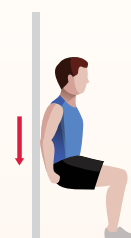
Strengthening activity helps to maintain and improve muscle strength. Strong muscle can help to take some of the pressure off joints, support and protect joints that are affected by OA. It is recommended to work all the major muscle groups of the body (include chest, back, shoulders, arms, legs and hips) for at least twice per week. Those activities include weight lifting, push-up, squats, yoga, resistance bands or gardening.

It is proven that exercise will benefit OA patients and improve their symptoms as well as quality of life. Exercise will decrease joint pain and joint stiffness, lubricate joints, preserve range of motion and delay disability. Besides, exercise will help to strengthen muscle, improve balance, make people feel more energetic and help to regulate mood in people with depression and anxiety.



Knee Workout

[Repeat 3 times and up to 2 minutes rest between sets]



10 wall half squats



10 wide single leg squats



15 seconds cross leg side tilts



10 alternating leg raises



20 alternating raised leg swings



15 seconds each leg hamstring stretch



10 alternating split squats