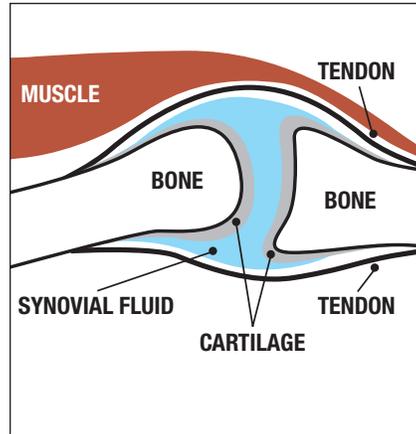


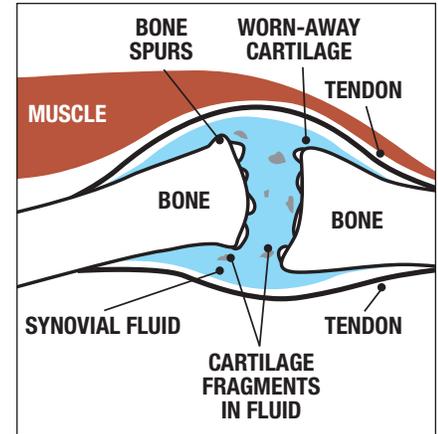
# OSTEOARTHRITIS & YOU

## What is osteoarthritis?

Osteoarthritis (OA) is a disease that affects the cartilage in the joints. Cartilage is the firm, rubbery tissue that cushions your bones and allows them to glide over one another. If the cartilage breaks down or wears away, the bones rub together. This rubbing causes pain, swelling, stiffness and, over time, deformity of the joint.

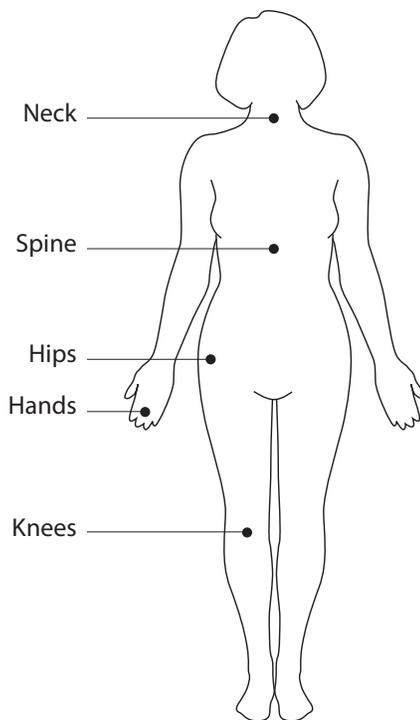


Healthy Joint



Joint with Severe OA

## Joints Most Commonly Involved:



## Help your Osteoarthritis with:

- Beginning or changing your exercise activities
- Losing weight if you are overweight to put less stress on your joints
- Eating a healthy diet to keep your weight at a normal level
- Trying rest, relaxation, stress-reduction, and biofeedback to help with pain
- Joint care using special footwear, insoles, splints, and braces
- Heat or ice, pain-relief treatments such as capsaicin for knees and hips, acupuncture, or physical therapy to ease pain
- Medications (over-the-counter for mild relief and prescriptions for more severe pain)
- Surgery for joint replacement if needed

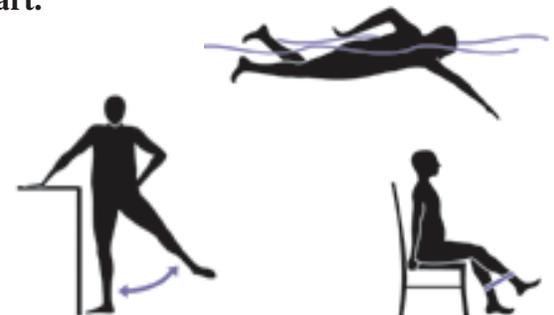
## Exercise is one of the most important things you can do!

Exercise improves muscle strength, decreases joint pain and stiffness, and lowers the chance of disability due to OA.

**Have your healthcare provider approve your exercise plan before you start.**

### Types of exercises include:

- Muscle-strengthening activities, such as light weight lifting
- Aerobic exercises, such as walking, swimming, and water aerobics
- Stretching and moving each joint through its full range of motion
- Balance and agility activities





## Eating a healthy diet and adding certain supplements can keep OA from getting worse

- **Get 200 mg of Vitamin C daily**  
Vitamin C is found in many fruits and some vegetables. Studies show that Vitamin C helps slow the progress of OA and protects joints from cartilage loss.
- **Get 9,000 IU of beta-carotene a day**  
Beta-carotene can be found in orange fruits and vegetables, as well as spinach, kale, and tomato juice. Beta-carotene may help slow the progress of OA.
- **Get 600 IU of Vitamin D daily**  
Vitamin D can be found in fish, milk, and eggs. Vitamin D helps to build bones and slow the loss of cartilage.
- **Get 3 grams of Omega-3 fatty acids daily**  
Omega-3 fatty acids can be found in some seeds, nuts, and fish. Omega-3 fatty acids lessen inflammation and help to form joint cells.

## Think about ways to protect your joints when you exercise and during daily activities

- Pace your activities – break activities down into small tasks, take breaks or do lighter tasks in-between heavier or repeated tasks.
- When squatting, kneeling, or using your joints, make sure you align them properly – this means not bending over too far or stressing your legs when lifting. For example, keep items you are lifting at waist height.
- Raise or lower seat levels to make it easier to get up or sit down, use items with bigger handles if your hands hurt and use a “reacher” so you don’t have to bend over. Handrails assist in balance.



## Relaxation techniques that help:

- Deep breathing exercises
- Muscle relaxation exercises
- Listening to music
- Visualization activities

## Medications you can take for pain:

You can take over-the-counter (OTC) medications and follow the doses recommended on the package:

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol and others)
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs): ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), naproxen (Aleve)

## Talk with your health care provider if:

- **You are taking the maximum dose of OTC NSAIDs.** The side effect of taking the maximum doses of these medications is the risk of stomach ulcers or bleeding. Your HCP may recommend a medication to protect your stomach, such as: Omeprazole (Prilosec OTC), Lansoprazole (Prevacid 24HR), Ranitidine (Zantac) or Famotidine (Pepcid).
- **You are taking the maximum dose of medicine and are still having joint pain, swelling, or stiffness.**
- **You are having trouble doing your daily activities.** Your HCP can prescribe a stronger dose of the NSAID or NSAIDs in combination with stomach-protecting medications.

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### Find more information online:

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality: <http://www.effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/>  
American College of Rheumatology: <http://www.rheumatology.org/> • Arthritis Foundation: <http://www.arthritis.org/>  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/> • PubMed Health: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/>  
Medline Plus: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/>