



Being Active When You Have **OSTEOARTHRITIS (OA)**

Prescription for Improving Healthy Body Status

Exercising with Osteoarthritis (OA) is as easy as 1, 2, 3

Being active is an important way to help reduce stiffness and joint pain. In fact, avoiding regular exercise can make your joint pain worse.

Getting Started

KEEP IT SIMPLE: Sit less and move more. Sitting still for too long will cause your joints to feel stiff. When you have OA you need to do small activities throughout the day. Keep it simple: Walk to get your mail. Dance in the kitchen. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. **ALL SMALL THINGS ADD UP.**



1 Get Moving

What

Any activity with low joint stress (biking, walking, water exercises)

When

3-5 days/week

How Hard

Start very light and continue to work up as joint pain allows. The overall goal should be for you to talk while exercising, but not sing.

On a scale of 1-10 you should aim to move between a 4-8.

1=short walk to get the mail
4-6= walking around the block, dancing in the kitchen.
10=hard running.

How Long

When you first start out, only exercise for a few minutes at a time. Aim for 3 minutes of exercise at a time. As you exercise more, increase your time by 3 minutes.

Example:

Week 1: Walk around your block. Walk between 2-6 intensity level.

Week 2: Walk around your block and then add another 3 minutes of walking. Walk between 3-6 intensity.

Week 3: Walk around your block and add another 6 minutes of walking. Keep this going for the next 2-3 months. Eventually you want to work up to 30 minutes of exercise at a time. Each week your intensity should increase until you hit a goal of 6-7.

PERCEIVED EXERTION CHART

10	Very, Very Hard Activity Completely out of breath, unable to talk
9	Very Hard activity Can speak only one word at a time
7-8	Hard Activity Out of breath, can speak a sentence or two
4-6	Moderate Activity Can talk but not sing
2-3	Light Activity Breathing is easy, can talk and sing
1	No Activity

Special Considerations: Find a partner to walk around the block. Aim for a few short sessions every day rather than one long session. Reduce joint strain by doing different type of activities throughout the week (bike one day, walk your dog another day and do water aerobics another day). Changing activities helps reduce joint stress. Warm water is better for joints than cold water. If your pain doesn't allow you to participate in a water aerobic class, try walking in the shallow end of the pool instead. This will help build your strength and stamina.



2 Get Strong

What

Start by using your own body weight.

Do each of the following:

Sit & Stands: Sit in a steady chair – using a kitchen chair is ideal, and then stand up.

Calf Raises: Stand with your feet flat on the floor and shoulder-width apart. Raise yourself onto your toes and then lower your heels back to the floor. If you need to, stand near a countertop and hold onto it for extra balance.

Knee Lifts: In a standing position raise one knee. Lower your foot flat to the floor and raise the other knee.

**Do each of these exercises 10 times.
Rest 1-3 minutes between exercises.**

Example: 10 sit and stands, rest 1 minute, 10 calf raises, rest 1 minute, 10 knee lifts, rest 1 minute.

As you get stronger and joint pain gets less, you can add hand weights and resistance bands.

When : How Hard

2-3 days/week.
Rest at least one day in between.

Start slowly. On a scale of 1-10 you should be working at 4-8.

- 1=sitting on the couch
- 4=just able to feel your muscles being used
- 8=sweating during the exercise
- 10=can't do the exercise

How Long

10 repetitions to start. Build up as you can.

Special Considerations: If you have joint pain during exercise you don't need to completely stop. You can try exercising a different muscle group. Some parts of exercise can be more comfortable depending on your joint pain. If your joint pain continues 24-48 hours after the exercise, consider reducing how hard the exercise is and do fewer exercises next time. For example, if standing knee lifts worsen joint pain, the next time you exercise, sit to do knee lifts. Be sure to wear supportive shoes! Set smaller goals if needed.



3 Get Stretching

What

Stretching is a great way to make your muscles strong and reduce joint stress.

Do each of the following:

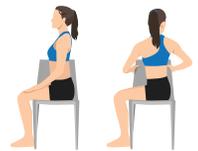
Arm Circles:



Toe Touches:



Waist Twists:



When

You should stretch before and after every exercise session.

Example: Stretch before you walk and after your walk is done. Stretch before you do your knee lifts, sit and stands, and calf raises. Stretch when you are done.

How Hard : How Long

Stretch as far as you can until you feel muscle tightness. Don't overstretch, this could hurt your muscle. If you can't quite touch your toes, aim for your calf or your knees.

Do 5-10 of each stretch.

Performing these exercises, including the suggested frequency, intensity and duration will help you meet the American College of Sports Medicine Guidelines for exercise participation and improve your health and fitness.

Local Resources

Free: Footprints for Fitness (Saginaw Center Courts), Walk with a Doc (YMCA)

Paid: Scan QR code for additional resources

