Arthritis NZ
Mateponapona
Aotearoa

Living well with
arthritis

Osteoarthritis – Live well and plan for the future



Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis. It is more common as we age but can also affect younger age groups. Osteoarthritis can affect any joint but is most common in hips, knees, hands, feet, and spine and can cause joint stiffness, pain, swelling muscle weakness, and there is no cure.

Progression of Osteoarthritis varies from person to person, making it difficult to predict what having a diagnosis of Osteoarthritis will mean for your future wellbeing.

However, we do know that there are many lifestyle factors (self-management) that can be an important part of managing symptoms, improving wellbeing, and reducing flares both now and for the future.

These include

- Healthy activity and nutrition
- Weight management
- Joint protection
- Relaxation
- Stress and Sleep management
- Heat and cold
- Complementary therapies

Healthy activity, nutrition and weight management

Regular exercise is one of the most important things you can do to manage your arthritis and improve your quality of life. Exercise will reduce pain, keep you moving, restore flexibility and protect your joints against further damage. Visit our Exercise and Arthritis section to learn more.

Having healthy nutrition is important to maintain a healthy weight, supports your energy, improves your general wellbeing and mental health, which all contributes to reduce pain levels, increase comfort levels, and reduce your level of disability.

Joint Protection

Stress on sore joints can contribute to pain and stiffness. Adapting how you do your activities and tasks can protect your joints. Download the Pain Booklet on our website to find out more about joint protection on page 9.

Stress, relaxation and sleep management

Relaxation techniques such as meditation, deep breathing, visualisation and distraction (exercise, reading, listening to music) can help reduce stress, anxiety, low mood and muscle tension. Use these techniques every day.



Heat and cold

Heat will relax your muscles and increase your blood circulation. Try warm baths and showers, saunas, wheat packs or hot water bottles to relieve your pain. Cold numbs the painful area and reduces swelling. Try applying an ice pack wrapped in towel for no more than 15 minutes, or a wheat bag that has been in the freezer in a plastic bag.



Complementary therapies

Many people benefit from complementary therapies. These include acupuncture, massage, tai chi, TENS, herbal supplements and rongoa. It is important to speak to your doctor before trying any herbal supplements.

Learn more and find support

Scan QR to visit the Arthritis NZ website

info@arthritis.org.nz
www.arthritis.org.nz
0800 663 463