



TYPES OF ARTHRITIS AND MANAGING THE PAIN

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Arthritis is a general term for conditions that cause problems with joints and the connective tissue around joints. Arthritis affects about 1 in 4 adults in the US. There are over 100 different types of arthritis and most cause pain and stiffness in the joints. The risk of developing arthritis increases as you age, but children can have arthritis too. Keep reading about arthritis and how to manage the condition.

Tips for Prevention

What are the most common types of arthritis?

Of the many types of arthritis, there are a few that are most common, including:

- › Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis and affects the hips, knees, and hands the most. You may hear it called 'wear-and-tear' arthritis because the cartilage slowly deteriorates over time. It causes pain, stiffness, and swelling in the joints.
- › Gout is a form of inflammatory arthritis that commonly affects the big toe joint. People with gout experience flare-ups and periods of remission.
- › Certain autoimmune disorders can affect the joints. Examples include fibromyalgia, rheumatoid arthritis, and lupus.
 - Fibromyalgia causes pain and stiffness all over the body including the joints.
 - Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disease. This means the body doesn't recognize its own healthy cells and attacks them as if they are a threat. RA commonly affects joints in the wrists, hands, and knees.
 - Lupus is also autoimmune and can affect the joints.



What are the risk factors for developing arthritis?

Being overweight or obese increases the risk of developing arthritis, especially osteoarthritis. The more overweight you are, the more stress is put on your joints anytime you move around, especially your hips and knees. Maintaining a healthy weight through diet and regular exercise is one of the best things you can do for your joints.

Overuse injuries like excessive or repetitive bending put extra stress on the joints, so occupations that involve a lot of activity like repetitive squatting or bending can increase your risk of developing joint problems. Bacterial and viral infections can infect joints, so always see a doctor if you notice redness or swelling in your joints. Smoking cigarettes increases the risk of developing rheumatoid arthritis. Most people can't quit on their own or on their first try, so commit to quitting and don't get discouraged.

How is arthritis treated?

There is no cure for arthritis, but it is possible to manage symptoms. If you've been diagnosed with arthritis, staying consistently active is going to be

important. Other than keeping your joints healthy, exercise is essential for overall health. Any chronic condition can take a toll on your mental health, and exercise helps those with arthritis manage that stress. If you have a physically demanding job, make sure you are following all safety guidelines and take precautions to protect your joints.

Some forms of arthritis require medications as the main form of treatment, while with other types, you should focus on managing your weight and exercising to help with symptoms long-term. Talk to your healthcare provider about exercising safely with arthritis and discuss if medication management is necessary for your arthritis. Recommendations for exercise usually include starting slow and keeping activity low impact, then slowly adding challenges and including a combination of low-impact aerobic activity and strength training for major muscle groups. It is best to talk to your healthcare provider about what type of activity is best for you.

Resources:

1. [Arthritis | CDC](#)
2. [What Causes Osteoarthritis, Symptoms & More | NIAMS \(nih.gov\)](#)
3. [Physical Activity for Arthritis | CDC](#)
4. [Exercise and Arthritis \(rheumatology.org\)](#)