

Self-management of Osteoarthritis

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Goals



Re-define osteoarthritis (OA)

Describe ways to self-manage OA

What to expect with long-term
management

Outline

General Terms

Basic Principles

- Exercise
- Self-management

Joint-specific
Information

Introduction

- Osteoarthritis (OA) = break down of the cartilage that cover the ends of bones
- Everyone's cartilage breaks down over time, it is a normal process of aging
- Many people have OA but do not experience pain
- "Wrinkles on the inside"

Pressure is the Name of the Game

Avoid Joint
Compression

Avoid High-
impact
Activities

Avoid Carrying
Heavy Loads
(weight)

Basic Exercise Guidelines

Cardio and Non-
weight Bearing
Exercise

Strength is the
Goal

Regularity and
Consistency

Assistive Devices

Walkers



Canes

Crutches



Self-management

Correct Poor Alignment

- Shoes
- Inserts
- Cane

Decrease Joint Forces

- Lose weight
- Shoes with more cushion
- Stronger muscles
- Stretch tight muscles
- Run slower
- Perform low-impact exercise

Joint-specific Information

Hip and Knee OA

Thigh and Hip
Muscle Strength

Aerobic Exercise

Balance

Spine OA

Abdominal
Strength*

Exercises 4+
days per Week

Pre-surgical
Exercise

Shoes with
Cushion

Avoid High-
impact Activity

What about Medications?

- This is a good question for your medical provider
- Medications can help pain, but do not help the health of your joint
- No class of medications (Advil, Tylenol, opioids) have shown any long-term benefits for function

Main Take-aways

- OA is not a “disease”
 - Wrinkles on the inside
- You can manage your symptoms and live an active life with OA
- Stopping activity is NOT helpful
 - Consistency is key
- Reduce the pressure on your joints
 - Lose weight

Thank you!

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