

Exercise: An effective remedy for joint pain.

Joint pain can rob you of life's simple pleasures-you may no longer look forward to going to the store, chasing grandchildren, or getting out of bed. Even the basics of life, can be sharp reminders of your limitations.

Exercising properly can be a long lasting way to subdue ankle, knee, hip, or shoulder pain. It might seem that exercise would aggravate aching joints that is simply not the case. Exercise can actually relive joint pain in many ways.

- It increases stability and flexibility of the muscles and tissues surrounding the joints. Stronger thigh muscles can help support the knee relieving some of the pressure on surrounding joints.
- Exercise can help reduce stiffness and preserve or lengthen range of motion. The body is made to move. When not exercised the tendons, muscles, and ligaments tend to tense up.
- It will stimulate the production of synovial fluid. Synovial fluid brings oxygen and nutrients inside the joint. Therefore, exercise helps keep the joint well oiled.
- Exercise promotes natural pain protection. It taps into the natural components that keeps pain at a lower point.
- It helps bring your weight under control, which can alleviate pain in weight bearing joints, as hips, knees and ankles.

If that isn't enough, consider this: exercise also increases the amount of natural chemicals in the brain that help boost your mood. You'll feel happier- in addition to feeling better.

Three Ways to Put Off Joint Replacement

Tip # 1: Lose weight

The most important way to care for your joints is to stay at a healthy weight. For every extra pound you carry, you put about three pounds of pressure on your knees and multiply the pressure on your hips by six. If you have arthritis, losing 15 pounds can cut your knee pain in half. Eventually, if you need a joint replacement, losing weight ahead of time can reduce your risk of having complications from surgery. If you have tender joints, you can still work out-as long as you your exercises are gentle on your joints, such as riding a stationary bike, walking, or swimming.

Tip # 2: Take care when using your joints

By standing up straight instead of slouching, you can protect joints in the neck, hips, and knees. Using the appropriate technique when carrying or lifting anything heavy. If any movement hurts,

stop doing it right away. Poor posture and using incorrect techniques when lifting or carrying anything heavy may add more stress to damaged joints. If any activity hurts, stop doing it right away.

Tip # 3: Get pain relief

Instead of going to the doctor for pain, try taking an over the counter pain reliever. NSAIDs, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) or naproxen (Aleve) or the prescription Celebrex can relieve pain and joint inflammation. These drugs can cause side effects, such as bleeding, stomach upset, and liver and kidney damage. Talk to your doctor before using an over the counter NSAID. The diet supplement glucosamine chondroitin can decrease arthritis pain is a mix. "It doesn't rebuild joints, but it does seem to help with the pain in some people," Dr Martin says.