

Physical Therapy

How it can help living with arthritis

Arthritis is not just one condition, but an umbrella term for a group of over 100 kinds of arthritis. These conditions are common in how they cause joint stiffness and pain, which can reduce mobility and your quality of life. Contrary to common belief, arthritis doesn't only affect older people, but can affect Canadians of any age. In fact, over four and a half million Canadians are living with arthritis today.

There are two different types that the many kinds of arthritis can fall into:

Osteoarthritis: This is caused by break down of cartilage which leads to the bones within joints rubbing together. This often results in pain, stiffness, and eventual loss of use. Some kinds of Osteoarthritis are thought to be genetically driven, while others can be a result of age or injury. This kind of arthritis often affects hands and wrists, as well as weight bearing joints like the hips or knees.

Inflammatory Arthritis: This type of arthritis is caused by an autoimmune disease. The body's immune system attacks the joints and surrounding tissues, causing inflammation and damage. Inflammatory Arthritis can affect any joint in your body.

Why Choose Physical Therapy?

Physical therapists are experts in the way the body moves. They can help you maintain and improve activity levels through tailored exercise programs, as well as address your symptoms and concerns that are limiting your ability to move and participate in activities you would like to pursue. Overall, physical therapy helps to decrease pain and disability while increasing function and quality of life.

Prevention:

Physical therapists play an integral role in the nonpharmacologic management of arthritis. Throughout early stages and progression of the disease your physical therapist can evaluate your strength, fitness, and joint function. With their expertise in body mechanics, they can properly treat any problems or dysfunction that may arise related to arthritis symptoms. Physical therapists are trained to implement specific training programs that can help patients fulfill a happier more functional life with arthritis



Physical Therapy For Arthritis Aims To:

- Reduce pain and improve quality of life
- Improve range of motion and function of joints
- Strengthen supporting muscle groups of the affected joint(s)
- Reduce joint load throughout weight loss programs
- Improve activities of daily living



Treatments:

- **Exercise Prescription:** Provide a specific plan of fitness-related activities that are designed for each individual.
- **Joint Mobilization:** Therapist guided movement to increase range of motion and function of a particular joint.
- **Acupuncture:** Strategic needling that may assist in releasing tight, spasmed, shortened muscles to a relaxed state.
- **Electrotherapy:** Electrically stimulating muscle tissue to assist in relieving pain and stiffness and improving physical function of a joint.
- **Hydrotherapy:** Safe and guided exercises in a pool to reduce loading of joints, decrease pain, and facilitate rehabilitation.
- **Support Aids/Education:** Proper fitting and alignment of mobility aids customized to the individual to enhance mobility and ensure safety.

**The treatments listed above are some available options that physiotherapist may use. Not every physiotherapist will offer every option. Talk to your doctor to see if physiotherapy would benefit you!*

In Partnership With:

In Partnership with: This document was created in the hopes of spreading information on how physical therapy can help people effected by arthritis. Students from the School of Physical Therapy have created this document in partnership with the Saskatchewan Physical Therapy Association and Arthritis Society.



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