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Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc.



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WELLNESS WEEKLY

Tips to Keep Your Joints Healthy



Move to Help Prevent Joint Pain

Keep joints healthy by keeping them moving. The more you move, the less stiffness you'll have. Whether you're reading, working, or watching TV, change positions often. Take breaks from your desk or your chair and move around.

Joint Pain and Arthritis

With overuse or injury, cartilage on the end of joints can break down, causing a narrowing of the joint space and the bones to rub together. Painful bony growths, or spurs, may form. This can lead to swelling, stiffness, and possibly osteoarthritis, the most common type of arthritis. Another type of arthritis is rheumatoid arthritis, an autoimmune disease characterized by extreme inflammation.

Healthy Weight for Healthy Joints

Losing just a few pounds can take some strain off your hips, knees, and back. Extra pounds add to the load placed on these joints, increasing the risk of cartilage breakdown. Even a little weight loss can help. Every pound you lose takes four pounds of pressure off your knees.

Low-Impact Exercise for Joints

To protect your joints, your best choices are low-impact options like walking, bicycling and swimming. That's because high-impact, pounding, and jarring exercise can increase your risk of joint injuries and may slowly cause cartilage damage. Light weight-lifting exercises should also be included. But if you already have arthritis, first speak with your doctor.

Full Range of Motion is Key

Move joints through their full range of motion to reduce stiffness and keep them flexible. Range of motion refers to the normal extent joints can be moved in certain directions. If you have arthritis, your doctor or physical therapist can recommend daily range-of-motion exercises.

Drink Milk to Keep Bones Strong

Calcium and vitamin D help keep bones strong. Strong bones can keep you on your feet, and prevent falls that can damage joints. Dairy products are the best sources of calcium, but other options are green, leafy vegetables like broccoli and kale. If you don't get enough calcium in your diet, ask your doctor about supplements.

Protect Joints With Good Posture

Stand and sit up straight. Good posture protects your joints all the way from your neck down to your knees. One easy way to improve posture is by walking. The faster you walk, the harder your muscles work to keep you upright. Swimming can also improve posture.

Be Careful Lifting and Carrying

Consider your joints when lifting and carrying. Carry bags on your arms instead of with your hands to let your bigger muscles and joints support the weight.

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Source: <http://arthritis.webmd.com/ss/slideshow-keep-joints-healthy>