

# INNER CIRCLE INSIGHTS

## Osteoarthritis: The Benefits of Exercise

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When joints develop osteoarthritis, exercise might be the last thing you are thinking about. However, exercising regularly is one of the best things that you can do to take care of yourself and your joint. Why is exercise beneficial to painful joints? It can safely provide pain relief and build muscle strength along with:

- Exercise can help you live a longer and more active lifestyle.
- The endurance and strength exercises can actually reduce pain levels.
- Exercise helps to lubricate internal joint surfaces.
- Exercise promotes strong bones; allowing you to keep and possibly improve your overall bone strength.
- Exercise maintains and improves muscle and connective tissue strength which can lead to improved functional abilities.
- Exercise improves balance and coordination which decreases potential falls.
- Exercise helps decrease potential injuries to the joint surfaces.
- People who exercise feel more confident about changing behaviors and problem solving.

### **Is exercise safe?**

Yes; it absolutely is! There are many types of exercises but the safest forms are stretching, strengthening, and aerobic exercise. Your health and safety is important; therefore, you should be cleared by your physician or physical therapist before beginning any form of exercise.

### **Why is exercise important?**

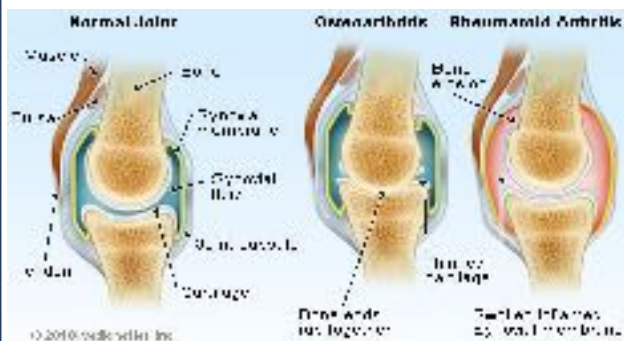
- Stretching Exercises – This type of exercise is important for increasing the flexibility of a joint. When your joint flexibility improves you will start to have a normal movement pattern and maintain functional abilities of the joint. For example; ascending and descending a staircase requires 90 degrees of knee flexion. Without that flexion, stairs can become extremely difficult and become an obstacle instead of being a part of your daily life routine.
- Strengthening Exercises – This type of exercise is important for the stability of a joint. When your joint has stability you will notice a decrease in pain or pain free with the activities and functions that you do. A great exercise for strengthening is walking; walking improves the strength of your joints and will allow you to walk for longer distances with less pain.
- Aerobic Exercises – This type of exercises is important for many different reasons. When you improve your cardiovascular health you will increase your activities, prevent disability, improve the wellbeing of your heart and blood vessels, and decrease levels of fatigue. There are a few great exercises for aerobics; swimming, bicycling, or using an elliptical will get your heart pumping without high levels of stress to your joints.

### **Which exercises should I not do and how do I know when to stop or if it is too much for me?**

High impact exercises should be avoided; these exercises include jogging, weight lifting, and exercises that require deep knee bending. If exercise causes pain that is prolonged, it may be too strenuous. When you have arthritis you will need to adjust your exercise program if you notice any of the following:

- Persistent fatigue
- Increased weakness
- Decreased range of motion
- Increased joint swelling
- Continual pain

### **How should I start?**



### Normal and Arthritic Joints

- Hands on manual therapy to reduce pain
- Mechanical evaluation to review your joint movement and ensure abnormal patterns

It is important to progress slowly and do your exercises properly; asking for help if you are unsure or if the pain increases. Start by doing low impact exercises for 20 to 30 minutes a day, with a goal of increasing this time. If you are unable to complete 20 to 30 minutes any amount of time will get the joints moving and start your journey of a better lifestyle. When starting your exercises follow these steps to ensure success:

1. Use heat on the affected body part before you start exercising
2. Start your exercise program with an aerobic exercise; such as walking, biking, or the elliptical.
3. After your aerobics perform some strengthening exercises; this is done slowly with light resistance and over time increasing the repetitions.
4. Then add in your stretching exercises; which is just as important as the other two.
5. After your exercise is completed use ice on the affected part of your body to reduce inflammation.
6. Enjoy it! Make it fun and stick with it; you will see improvements when you least expect to.

At Inner Circle, we always provide the best in hands on manual therapy in an attempt to change the restrictions that cause imbalances but we have also developed a 4-stage exercise program that is individual specific in order to strengthen what is weak and stretch what is tight. This program combination will provide you the change in your body you've been searching for but only if you give it the effort... "nothing in life worth anything was easy". Those aches and pains aren't going away by themselves, start taking time for yourself to regain the function and lifestyle you once had.

#### Our hands on therapy has seen positive results for:

- |                                 |                                  |                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Back, Neck, and Shoulder Pain | • TMJ                            | • Work-related Injuries    |
| • Herniated/Bulging Discs       | • Chronic Pain                   | • Women's Health Diagnosis |
| • Knee Pain                     | • Cerebral Palsy                 | • Auto Injuries            |
| • Headaches                     | • Gait Deviation                 | • Sports Injuries          |
| • Tendonitis                    | • Arthritis                      |                            |
| • Fibromyalgia                  | • Heel, Leg, Ankle, and Hip Pain |                            |
| • Carpal Tunnel Syndrome        | • Postsurgical Rehabilitation    |                            |

*For an appointment please call (215) 860-3623*

*"The Natural Force Within Each of Us  
is the Greatest Healer of Disease" – Hippocrates*

<http://www.innercirclept.com/>

#### Locations:

11 Cambridge Lane

Newtown, PA 18940

1411 Woodbourne Road  
Back Unit

It is important to discuss your intended exercise treatment plan with your physician or physical therapist. Inner Circle Rehabilitation has highly skilled therapist who provide a hands on treatment and an appropriate exercise program to decrease your pain while increasing your mobility and help you get back to your everyday activities. Our treatments include:

- are identified to avoid further osteoarthritic changes.
- Customized exercise program
- Education about your arthritis
- Education for rest/body mechanics and possible assistive devices
- Supervise your exercise program to maximize all the benefits.

Levittown, PA 19057

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St. Mary Medical Center  
St. Clare Bldg., Suite 221

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