

Adding it all up!

- * 1 out of 3 American adults suffer from some type of joint disease.
- * Gaining one pound puts four times more stress on knee and hip joints.
- * Although symptoms usually develop years later, osteoarthritis damage can begin as early as age 20 — especially among athletes who overtrain or sustain injuries.
- * By age 50, you've probably logged 75,000 miles or more on your knees.

4 Four keys to defeating osteoarthritis pain

Stay lean: Sometimes just losing excess weight relieves the pain.

Stay active: Physically fit people suffer less arthritis pain than people who aren't active.

Stay strong: Strong muscles help take the weight load off your joints, limiting cartilage damage. A strong core — abdominal and back muscles — keeps your body stable and balanced.

Stay informed: See a PM&R physician to learn about the latest advances in nonsurgical treatment options, pain medications, and medically supervised exercise programs.



Highland Center For Orthopaedics



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An active approach to

Osteoarthritis

Moving beyond the pain

Osteoarthritis is a degenerative joint disease that breaks down cartilage – the natural cushion inside your joints. The result is painful inflammation.

If you have osteoarthritis – the most common type of arthritis – you have plenty of company. About 20 million Americans have the condition.

Everyone experiences joint wear and tear, but not everyone develops the painful symptoms of osteoarthritis. Follow a few basic tips from PM&R physicians, and you can increase your odds of keeping your joints pain free.

Joint self-repair

Catch the condition when joint pain first begins, and you might be able to halt the progression of osteoarthritis. The right treatment plan can boost your body's natural self-repair process.

Here's how self-repair works: When you take a step, your moving body puts pressure on your joints, especially the knees and hips. Most of the impact, which is equal to about three or four times your body weight, is absorbed by joint cartilage. Movement first compresses and then releases the joint, squeezing water and nutrient-rich fluids in and out of the cartilage. This fluid exchange, which keeps joints lubricated and resilient, also promotes self-repair.

Enjoying the benefits of physical activity

The movement that allows your joints to become lubricated also helps lessen pain. Exercise also improves joint health by helping you shed excess weight and strengthening muscles.

But if you have joint pain, exercise may be the last thing you feel like doing. A *physical medicine and rehabilitation (PM&R) physician can help.*

A **PM&R physician** is a medical doctor who treats conditions that can cause pain or limit function. Also called physiatrists, PM&R physicians provide a full spectrum of nonsurgical care to restore maximum health and quality of life.

For help in overcoming arthritis, PM&R physicians:

- ✳ Are uniquely qualified to prescribe therapeutic exercise; they are trained in exercise physiology, ergonomics, and the latest research-based treatments.
- ✳ Help patients modify their activities to minimize pain and maximize their ability to do the things they want and need to do.
- ✳ Work with a team of health professionals to provide an individualized treatment plan and the tools that enable patients to take control of their health.
- ✳ Prescribe medication and provide treatments such as injections to help patients avoid surgery.
- ✳ Help achieve a successful recovery when surgery is necessary, by working with patients and their surgeons before and after the surgery.

Providing Care

PM&R physicians provide a full spectrum of nonsurgical care to restore maximum health and quality of life.



A PM&R physician can provide a multi-faceted treatment approach to osteoarthritis that might include:

Weight management. Excess weight can accelerate joint deterioration. PM&R physicians can help you identify safe, effective ways to achieve your healthiest weight.

Therapeutic exercise. PM&R-prescribed exercise focuses on stretching, strengthening, and range-of-motion exercises to help your joints work more easily and efficiently. PM&R treatment approaches:

- Build strength in muscles surrounding the joints.
- Modify the way you do a particular activity through use of gait and ergonomic analysis.
- Change the mechanical properties of your exercise by prescribing appropriate equipment, such as support braces.

Medications and supplements. A PM&R physician can help determine which prescription and non-prescription products are right for you.

- *Pain medications.* Options include acetaminophen; nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, such as ibuprofen; and, for more severe symptoms, prescription pain medications.
- *Corticosteroid injection therapy.* Steroids are applied directly to the joint for pain relief.
- *Nutritional supplements.* Some patients find pain relief with glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate. The benefits of these supplements are still being studied.

Other nonsurgical treatments. A PM&R physician may also prescribe:

- *Injections* of visco-lubricants to build up cartilage and lubricate joints.
- *Heat and cold therapy* to provide temporary pain relief.
- *Medical acupuncture* alongside traditional medicine techniques to provide pain relief.