

Arthritis

Exercise is an effective treatment for all sorts of arthritis including osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.

Prevention

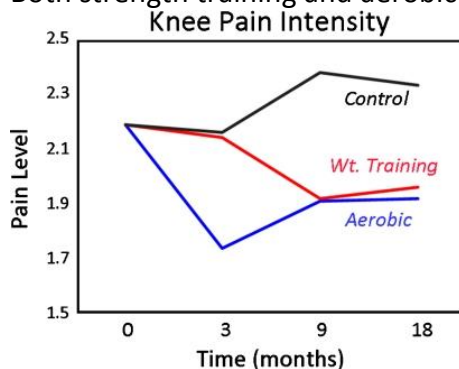
Regular physical activity and maintenance of muscle strength is likely to reduce your chance of getting osteoarthritis unless you get significant joint injuries ([Valderrabano 2011](#))

Treatment

Physical activity reduces pain and disability in osteoarthritis and is also a key treatment for back pain ([Messier 2012](#), [Juhl, 2014](#), [Fransen 2015](#), [Uthman 2013](#)).

Physical activity improves outcomes in rheumatoid and other types of inflammatory arthritis ([Cooney 2011](#); [FYSS](#))

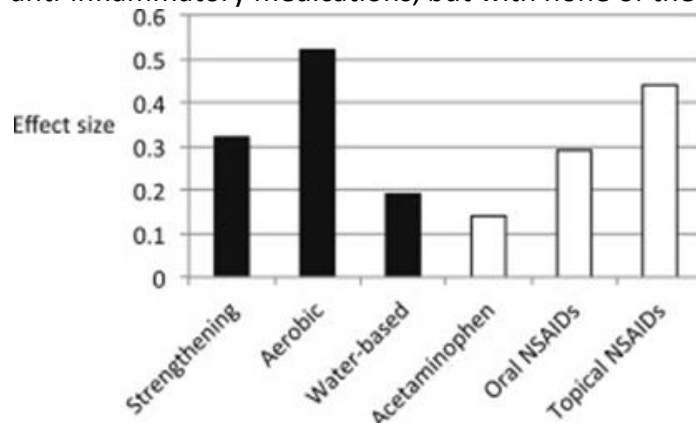
Both strength training and aerobic exercise will reduce your arthritis pain. ([Messier 2012](#))



Arthritis puts you at a higher risk of death and serious cardiovascular illness, so as well as improving your pain and function, exercise reduces your risk of these too ([Hawker 2014](#))

Comparisons

Exercise can reduce pain in osteoarthritis by the same amount as simple pain killers and anti-inflammatory medications, but with none of the risks ([Bennell 2014](#); [OARSI 2009](#))



Advice

Rest is NOT recommended in arthritis even if you have painful joints; you may just need to modify the type of exercise you do. Getting professional advice on exercise techniques is important for your joints ([ARUK 2014](#); [Metsios 2008](#))

Hydrotherapy (exercise in a swimming pool) is particularly good if you have severe joint problems or are overweight.

If you have arthritis ([ARUK 2014](#); [Bennell 2014](#)):

- Choose shoes and insoles that have high shock absorption
- Avoid high impact and contact sports as the risk of damage to your joints may be higher
- Avoid early morning exercise as joint stiffness/pain can be worse
- It may be useful to take your painkillers 20-30 minutes before exercising

If you suffer from increased pain lasting more than two hours after exercise or during the night or next day you have done too much exercise – increase the amount you do gradually.

Further resources for Healthcare Professionals

[Motivate to Move – Musculoskeletal Health](#)

[FYSS – Osteoarthritis](#)

[FYSS – Rheumatoid arthritis](#)