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Regular exercise for knees arthritis will do more good than harm

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Regular exercise has been found to reduce and even relieve not just arthritis pain but also other symptoms like swelling and stiffness



Just how we often compare a human brain to the C.P.U. of the computer, we cannot ignore that the human body in itself is no less than a machine which if not made to work or move can end up rusting. This is simply the reason why health experts cannot stress enough on how crucial and important it is for humans to exercise for the betterment of their bodies. Many times due to certain medical conditions or the pain we experience, some of us try to avoid exercising but more often than not, doctors suggest otherwise.

A common medical condition in which patients mostly are unsure if they should exercise or not is arthritis which affects millions of people globally. This confusion is usually due to knee pain which is commonly a by-product of arthritis. Exercising with an arthritic knee tends to come across as absurd to many. However, contrary to the common belief, regular exercise has actually been found to reduce and even relieve not just arthritis pain but also other symptoms like swelling and stiffness.

Some of the reasons why one should exercise despite arthritis of knees are:

- Reduce symptoms of arthritis such as pain and stiffness.
- Strengthen the muscles and ligaments supporting the joint
- Reduce stress on the joint and enhance strength as well as flexibility.
- Maintain full range of motion of the joints.
- Allow the patient to maintain a healthy weight and good for the heart too.
- Relieve overall fatigue symptoms.
- As well as for physical health, also beneficial for mental health.

Exercises for knee arthritis

It is not enough to just exercise without being well informed about the effect of those exercises as well as about your body and its condition. An arthritis patient’s doctor or physical therapist can best recommend some exercises that may include strengthening exercises, aerobic exercises, range-of-motion exercises, and other activities. Your doctor should fit exercising into your treatment plan based on the type of arthritis that you have and the joints that are involved.

Before beginning to exercise, understand what's within your limits and what level of exercise is likely to give you results.

- Most of these exercises are easy, effective, and convenient and do not require any special equipment or place. They can be carried out at home or even in the office during a break. It is important to keep in mind that these exercises should be made a habit only slowly and gradually. The frequency or intensity should only be increased eventually as the muscles get stronger.
- Exercises like leg raise, hamstring stretch, half-squat, one-leg dip, leg stretch, etc. work well for the arthritis of knees.
- Walking is also an excellent form of exercise for knees as it has low-impact, it is a weight-bearing exercise, and it helps strengthen muscles as well as build bone. Just remember to wear good, sturdy shoes.
- Water exercises or walking in the shallow end of a pool also aid in muscle strength and knee flexibility.
- Swimming is an all round exercise with no strain on the joints and also good for the heart and lungs.

The following exercise routine can be practiced daily to strengthen the muscles that stabilize and support the knee, and also to improve balance by training your brain to be aware of your leg's position in space:

- Lie on your back with one leg bent at the knee.
- Extend your other leg and slowly trace out the letters of the alphabet in broad strokes.
- Switch legs and repeat the same.
- Do this with each leg three to five times, or until your muscles feel fatigued.

Some discomfort, pain and even a bit of soreness is likely to be experienced during exercising which is completely normal. But severe pain, swelling or stiffness is not preferred which is why it is suggested to do exercises in consultation with your doctor as well as to start put slowly and increase gradually.

Pre & post exercise

About 20 minutes before you begin exercising, you can out a moist-heat pack on your knees. This will allow the blood to come to the surface, reduce stiffness and also soothe in case of pain.

If pain medications are included in your intake, try having those 45 minutes prior to exercising.

After you are done exercising, make sure you do some stretches to prevent the muscles from tightening. You can also put an ice pack on your sore knee after exercising for 10-15 minutes as this would bring down any swelling if caused by exercises.

Before starting out with exercising your arthritic knee, some tips to be considered include:

- Keep the impact low.
- Apply heat as it relaxes the joints and muscles and relieves any pain you have before you beginning.
- Remember to move the joints gently at first to warm up.
- Exercise with slow and easy movements.
- Apply ice to your joints as needed after activity.
- Don't exert more energy than your joints can handle.
- Increase your exercise length and intensity slowly as you progress.
- In the case of sore muscles, exercise every other day.
- Do not overdo.

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