



There are many types of arthritis, including osteoarthritis (OA) and rheumatoid arthritis (RA). These cause pain in your joints, such as your knees and fingers. Physiotherapy can help.

# Treatment for *Arthritis*

## *How can physiotherapy help?*

Exercise can help you manage some of the symptoms of arthritis. Physiotherapists provide advice and education on exercise, pain relief and ways to manage your condition. They can teach you how to improve your joint movement and walking, as well as how to strengthen your muscles.

Your physio may offer exercise in water, perhaps at your local swimming pool. They may also offer acupuncture for some conditions. Being active can really help you to stay mobile and independent.

You are also likely to see a physio before and after a joint operation, such as a total knee (TKR) or total hip (THR) replacement. The physio will help you walk properly and make sure you are recovering well.

Physiotherapy has been shown to work through clinical studies and research and is a treatment you can trust.

## *What happens when I see a physiotherapist?*

When you see a physio, they will assess your problem and give you advice. They may give you a physical treatment. Everything you tell the physio will be completely confidential.



So that your physio can have a good look at how you move, they may need you to remove some clothes. It's a good idea to dress comfortably and wear suitable underwear.

## Find a physio

Physios are the third largest health profession after doctors and nurses. They work in the NHS, in private practice, for charities and in the work-place, through occupational health schemes.

Ask your GP for a referral to an NHS physio or find a private physio at: <http://www.csp.org.uk/your-health/find-physio/access-options>

## How can I help myself?

There are exercises that can reduce joint pain and ways to help prevent it coming back. Depending on the individual person, changes in your posture and life style may also help. Learning how to 'pace' yourself will help you to carry on with your usual activities. Pacing yourself means that you keep active without overusing an arthritic joint. See our free exercise leaflets [www.csp.org.uk/publications/common-pains-conditions](http://www.csp.org.uk/publications/common-pains-conditions)

## What is arthritis?

There are more than 200 types of arthritis and related conditions. In osteoarthritis the joints show signs of wear and tear, which increases as time goes by. Osteoarthritis is more common in older people. It particularly affects the joints that get heavy use, such as hips and knees. It may also occur after a fracture or previous damage to the joint. In rheumatoid arthritis, the body's immune system attacks the joints, which can become red and swollen if not treated.

Most types of arthritis have several causes.

If there is arthritis in your family, you may be more likely to develop it. However, arthritis can start suddenly, without any obvious cause, at any age.

## Top tips

- Keep active. Work on keeping your muscles strong and your joints moving
- Maintain a healthy weight, so your body is not too heavy for your joints to carry
- Avoid making an inflamed joint worse
- Get advice on how to manage your condition yourself
- Seek advice to see if walking aids, a support or brace would help
- Good posture will help you carry your body weight evenly, using both your arthritic and non-arthritic joints. Poor posture can cause problems with your healthy joints, as well as your vision and breathing
- Use cooling packs over painful joints correctly following manufacturer's instructions. The area round the joint should have good circulation and don't leave the pack on for too long.

## Further information

**NHS Choices:** comprehensive information on arthritic conditions

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/arthritis/Pages/Introduction.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/arthritis/Pages/Introduction.aspx)

**Arthritis Research UK:**

[www.arthritisresearchuk.org](http://www.arthritisresearchuk.org)

**Arthritis Care:**

[www.arthritiscare.org.uk](http://www.arthritiscare.org.uk)



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