

# Osteoarthritis | Prevention & Self-Management

Over 32 million Americans - 1 in almost every 10 adults - have osteoarthritis (OA). This disease of the joints can cause pain, stiffness, and weakness and often leads to disability. Below are strategies you can use to avoid or manage OA and improve your quality of life.

## Weight loss can:

- ↓ the risk of developing OA
- ↓ pain for those who have OA

For every pound of weight lost, there is a 4-lb reduction in stress on your knees.

## Practical tips to manage weight:

- Pre-portion food for snacks and meals
- Avoid high calorie drinks
- Practice mindful eating
- Eat a salad or fruit prior to a meal

Individuals with a history of **knee injury** are **3-6 times** more likely to develop knee OA.

A good training program can reduce the chance of knee injuries by up to 50% and may help prevent injury-related knee OA.

For athletes, it just takes 15 minutes, 2 to 3 times each week to do:

- Warm-up exercises
- Sports skills
- Balancing exercises
- Strength training

**Self-management education** classes (online or in the community) can educate and empower people to manage the day-to-day impact of OA. The Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) provides useful tools to help manage symptoms related to many chronic conditions, including OA.

Find a workshop near you:  
[www.selfmanagementresource.com](http://www.selfmanagementresource.com)

Self Management Education

**Physical activity is one of the best treatments for OA.**

Physical activity improves pain, stiffness, and physical function in patients with OA. National guidelines: 150 mins/week of moderate intensity; even 45 is helpful.

Simple ways to be more active:

- Walk around the house
- March in place (e.g. while watching TV)
- Park in furthest spot from the entrance

Weight Management

Injury Prevention

Physical Activity

For more tips and resources, visit:  
<https://oaaction.unc.edu/rxlinks/>