



## Take One Step Forward: Stay Active with Osteoarthritis

Stiffness, swelling and pain in your joints from osteoarthritis (OA) should not keep you from your favorite activities. There is a common myth that being active could make your joint pain symptoms worse, but the opposite is true! **Doing simple exercises to build your strength and keep your body moving can reduce your pain and stiffness.**

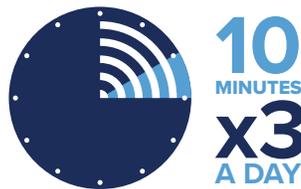
**Osteoarthritis (OA)** is the most common type of arthritis. For most people, OA can get worse over time if you don't address the symptoms now.

### Find your fit

Not every type of exercise is for everyone. Experiment to find the kind that works for you. The key is finding something that you enjoy and can stick with over time. Remember that as your symptoms change over time, you may need to adjust your activity and try a different exercise routine.

### Arthritis-Friendly Exercises

Low-impact activities can keep you moving and help build strength. Whatever you choose, start with just 10-15-minutes or less and build up your endurance over time. Try to do your exercise at least three times a week to get you on the road to less joint pain. Eventually, aim for exercising at least five days a week.



- **Walking** – Take a short walk around the neighborhood. Did you know that people who walk with a friend - human or furry - actually spend more time walking than those who go it alone?
- **Water Exercise** – Water aerobics or swimming can help build strength while relieving joint pain.
- **Yoga** – Build strength, improve flexibility, increase blood flow and calm your mind with a gentle yoga session.
- **Stretching and strengthening exercises** – Regular stretching and strengthening will help improve your range of motion and strengthen your muscles to make your everyday activities easier to get done.

### IMPORTANT

Before you start an exercise routine, check with your healthcare provider. Initially, you may feel some pain or discomfort when starting to exercise, but here are some **warning signs that you might be overdoing it or that something is wrong:**

- *Sharp pain*
- *New pain in a new area*
- *Pain that lasts more than 2 hours after exercise*
- *Shortness of breath, chest pain, or dizziness*

## Do one thing to move more

- Park your car farther away from the store or library.
- Complete some stretches or strengthening moves while watching your favorite television show.
- Combine your walks with another activity, like listening to a podcast or an audiobook.
- Use an activity tracker, pedometer, or mobile app to log your steps and set new personal goals.
- Reward yourself each time you reach a goal.

*There is no cure for arthritis. However, joint pain and OA symptoms can be managed through various treatments, physical activity, lifestyle changes, and education. Visit [oaaction.unc.edu/jointpain](https://oaaction.unc.edu/jointpain) to learn about treatment and lifestyle changes that get you on the path to less joint pain.*

**Walk With Ease (WWE)** is a walking program from the Arthritis Foundation proven to reduce arthritis pain and improve your overall health. Even if you haven't been formally diagnosed with arthritis, Walk With Ease is a great way to learn how to incorporate walking into your life safely and comfortably.

The guidebook will help you customize a program that fits YOU and your needs. The book can help you reach YOUR goals and includes self-assessments and knowledge-checks along the way. US residents can order a **FREE Walk with Ease** guidebook to begin their journey today! Visit [walkwitharthritis.org](https://walkwitharthritis.org)

