

Osteoarthritis: A Leading Cause of Disability

The pain, stiffness, and swelling from OA can limit function and mobility and diminish quality of life. These limitations may impact the ability to perform routine work tasks such as writing or typing, standing or sitting for long periods, or bending and walking.

OA is a chronic condition in many adults who also have heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. Physical activity is a recommended management strategy for all these conditions but can be more difficult for with OA because of joint pain.

To learn more about the vision and strategies for reducing the burden of OA, read [A National Public Health Agenda for Osteoarthritis: 2020 Update](#)



WHY OA MATTERS

- OA does not affect only older adults. **Over half of adults with OA are 18-64.**
- **Opioids and benzodiazepines are prescribed for 27% of people with OA,** despite the high risk of adverse side effects and drug addiction and a lack of evidence supporting the effectiveness of this approach.
- **People with OA are more likely to fall, and 1/3 suffer from depression or anxiety** due to pain and disability from OA.
- OA **increases the risk of social isolation,** possibly because of pain and depression caused by OA.
- **OA is the second most costly health condition treated in U.S. hospitals.** In 2013, this cost was \$16.5 billion, or 4.3% of the combined cost for all hospitalizations. It covered about 21 million ambulatory care visits and 3 million inpatient hospitalizations for people with OA and related disorders.
- **The pain and activity limitations of OA can be reduced with physical activity, self-management education, and other proven interventions.**



ACT NOW!

Take these actions to help promote healthy communities and healthy behaviors to address OA. Look for opportunities to assure equity in access and delivery of interventions.

- 1 Incorporate, integrate, and/or leverage strategies and messaging to prevent and manage arthritis in current public health initiatives**, particularly those around promoting physical activity and weight management, and preventing heart disease, diabetes, and injuries.



[Mayo Clinic – Exercise and Chronic Disease – Get the Facts:](#)

An example of how to incorporate various chronic conditions, including arthritis, into messaging about the importance of physical activity.



[National Institutes of Health – Physical Wellness Toolkit:](#)

User-friendly strategies for improving physical health that are pertinent to managing or preventing arthritis. There are links to additional toolkits, and information is available in English or Spanish.



- 2 Share information and materials** about OA prevention, treatment, and effective interventions/programs.



[Arthritis Foundation – Osteoarthritis:](#) Consumer-friendly information from the Arthritis Foundation to help patients and the public learn about osteoarthritis and treatments.



[Exercise is Medicine:](#) Essential guidelines on exercise for sedentary individuals and those with various chronic diseases and medical conditions.



[OAAA Website:](#) Downloadable handouts and other valuable resources for individuals with OA and their caregivers, healthcare providers, community organizations, and policymakers.

3

Expand the menu of recognized options for evidence-based, packaged, community-based, self-management education and physical activity programs, including alternative, low-cost, flexible delivery options (e.g., online self-directed guides, low-tech phone contact, self-help program books and toolkits).



[CDC Workplace Health Promotion:](#)

Sound, actionable information, vetted by the CDC and experts, to help employers launch or expand a workplace health promotion program.



[Community-based programs, recommendations, and resources to address OA:](#)

An online library of resources for community organizations to help implement arthritis lifestyle management programs.



[Walk With Ease Registration Portal:](#) The online registration portal for the Arthritis Foundation's Walk With Ease program. Participants can sign up for free through OAAA, or health departments can purchase their own portal.



4

Support state and community-level policy and system change efforts that improve nutrition, physical activity, and injury prevention environments.



[Arthritis Foundation – Advocacy 101:](#) Basic information and tips to get started with local, state, or national advocacy efforts for arthritis issues.



[The Community Guide:](#) A collection of evidence-based findings from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services to help select interventions to improve health and prevent disease in your state, community, community organization, business, healthcare organization, or school.



[Step It Up! The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities:](#) Tips and guides for a variety of sectors to increase walking and improve access.



[Physical Activity Implementation Guide:](#) A guide to engage a broad array of agencies and organizations across six key sectors as partners in establishing environmental and policy strategies for increasing physical activity among adults with arthritis.

5

Develop partnerships with community-based organizations, health care, and/or businesses to enhance the well-being of employees, the community, and the population as a whole.



[CDC 6/18 Resources and Tools](#): Public Health-Employer opportunities to improve population health.



[Leveraging Partnerships to Develop a Sustainable Approach to Increasing Adoption of Arthritis-Appropriate, Evidence-Based Interventions with Employers](#): Step-by-step approach and lessons learned for developing partnerships between employers, public health, and other organizations to increase opportunities for arthritis care developed by the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD).



[National Recreation and Park Association \(NRPA\) Partnership and Business Development](#): Tips for partnering with NRPA to make an impact through local parks across three pillars: conservation, health and wellness, and social equity.