

The best exercises for those suffering from arthritis

written by Virginia Cunningham | October 29, 2013

A lot of people believe arthritis means they have to say goodbye to their workout routine. While it might mean you have to *alter* your exercise plan, staying active actually can be one of the best ways to combat various forms of arthritis.

✘ What people who suffer from arthritis (or any kind of joint pain) need to keep in mind is that they still can benefit from exercise, as long as it's low impact. Particularly for the joint that's affected, a low impact workout can help to strengthen the muscle tissue around that joint and eventually help to improve that joint's mobility.

While it's certainly true that you need to be more careful when you're trying to manage both arthritic pain and a low impact exercise routine, you don't want to avoid exercise entirely as a method of healing your arthritis. A lack of exercise actually can contribute to arthritis and its complications, so don't completely leave your exercise routine in the dust when and *if* you have to deal with joint pain.

Instead, modify it. The following exercises can be great ways to get in a good workout while making sure that your joints are well cared for:

Aquatic Exercise

Water aerobics or other forms of aquatic exercise are low impact and easy on your joints. Any kind of water exercise also will be particularly effective at burning calories and helping you slim down, making it an ideal workout for those with joint pain.

Low Impact Cardio Training

Cardio exercise often is high impact, which means your knees can take a bit of a beating. If your knees aren't where you're dealing with arthritis, then you're probably in the clear for most forms of cardio.

However, lower impact cardio training is a good option just to give your joints a break. This can be the fan bike, rowers or ellipticals—all of which are fairly easy on your knees and other joints.

Yoga

Yoga involves mostly stretching, which means it's going to be particularly joint-friendly. While you may need to be careful about some of the more advanced yoga moves (depending on which joints have arthritis), in general, yoga is a great low impact option for anyone looking to add that as a component to their regular workout routine.

Walking

It doesn't seem like much of a workout, but walking for long distances is good for you and makes a great physical activity for those who are looking to stay active while lowering the stress on their joints.

It's true that you'll need to go longer distances in order to burn a significant amount of calories, but this can be an enjoyable and relaxing way to exercise because of how little stress it puts on your body.

Strength Training

For those with arthritis, you've got to be careful with this one. Small amounts of weight and low tension will win the day when mixing strength training with arthritic pain, but you should consider avoiding overworking the joints that do have arthritis.

The key is to start small and work your way up as you feel comfortable. Your joints will tell you if you're doing more harm than good, so just listen to your body and avoid taking on too much weight.

More Options Than You Think

If you have arthritis, the last thing you will want to do is forgo your exercise routine altogether. Keep moving and get a reasonable amount of physical activity in on a daily basis.

Chances are that you'll have to make some adjustments, but just listen to your body and be careful about working the joints that are giving you trouble. It sounds cliché, but in this case, you really *should* talk to your doctor or physical therapist if you're wondering what exercises will be helpful and acceptable.

This list can give you a place to start and will help you get the conversation going with your doctor. If your joint pain is significant enough, consider using a topical joint pain relief solution or speak with your primary physician for more advanced treatment options.