

ARTHRITIS AND EXERCISE

It was thought for many years that if you had arthritis you should not exercise because it would damage your joints however now, research has shown that exercise is an essential tool in managing your arthritis. The benefits of exercise as part of a treatment program for managing arthritis are well-known and documented. It has now been recognized that exercise can reduce pain, improve physical function,



improve muscle strength, and improve quality of life for people with arthritis. Today even doctors prescribe regular exercise for arthritis patients.

Many people use the word “arthritis” to refer to all rheumatic diseases. However, the word literally means joint inflammation; Arthritis is a general term that refers to many rheumatic diseases that can cause pain, stiffness, and swelling in joints and other connective tissues. These diseases can affect supporting structures such as muscles, tendons, and ligaments and may also affect other parts of the body. Some common types of arthritis are osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, gout, spondylitis etc., however, Osteoarthritis is the most common.

People who have arthritis can undertake three types of exercises

1. **Range-of-motion exercises** (e.g., dance, low impact aerobics or stretching) which help maintain normal joint movement and relieve stiffness. This exercise also helps to maintain or increase flexibility.
2. **Strengthening exercises** (e.g., weight training) help keep or increase muscle strength. Strong muscles help support and protect joints affected by arthritis.
3. **Aerobic or endurance exercises** (e.g., cycling) improve cardiovascular fitness, help control weight, and improve overall function. Weight control can be important to people who have arthritis because extra weight puts extra pressure on many joints. Some studies show that aerobic exercise can reduce inflammation in some joints.

Therefore their workout program should consist of: - Stretch and warm up with range-of-motion exercises, strengthening exercises with small weights (a 1- or 2-pound weight can make a big difference) they should progress slowly. After exercising they should use cold packs as it helps to stop pain and reduce swelling and it is often used for inflamed joints. And finally add aerobic exercise to your workout program.

The general question is how often should people with arthritis exercise? Range-of-motion exercises can be done daily and should be done at least every other day. Strengthening exercises should be done every other day unless you have severe pain or swelling in your joints. Aerobic or Endurance exercises should

be done for 20 to 30 minutes three times a week unless you have severe pain or swelling in your joints. Although exercise is very good for easing joint pain and inflammation people who have arthritis should start with low impact exercises such as swimming or stationary cycling. One of the best forms of exercise for people with arthritis of the hips and knees is water aerobics. However arthritis patients should remember if they feel unusual or persistent fatigue, increased weakness Decreased range of motion, and increased joint swelling and Continuous pain that lasts for more than 1 hour after exercising then, it is too strenuous. It is always advisable for people who suffer from arthritis should take the advice of their physician before embarking on an exercise program.