



Arthritis and joint pain

Most people have had some pain and stiffness from overusing muscles and joints. But arthritis means ongoing joint aches, stiffness, or swelling that cause chronic pain.

Managing arthritis pain

Whatever type of arthritis you have, there are some things you can do to help ease the pain.

Get gentle exercise. Stretching, muscle-strengthening, walking, and aerobic activity can all help relieve arthritis pain. Go slowly at first, and rest when you need to. Exercises that are gentle on joints include bicycling, swimming or water walking, [yoga](#), [tai chi](#), and [qi gong](#).

Manage your weight. Being overweight puts extra strain on weight-bearing joints (like hips and knees). [Get tips for reaching a healthy weight.](#)

Pick up a new tool. Velcro, grips, walking poles, canes, and other tools or “assistive devices” can help you with daily tasks. Learn about [assistive devices](#) and [tips for getting around your home and office](#) that make movement easier.

Use ice and heat. Heat works best for soreness and stiffness — try a heating pad, hot shower, or hot pack 2 or 3 times a day for 20 to 30 minutes. Cold works best for swollen joints — try putting cold packs on a painful joint 2 or 3 times a day for 10 to 20 minutes. Be sure to put a thin towel between the ice and your skin.

Eat more fish. Fish oil contains omega-3 fatty acids. Some people believe that these fatty acids may help with joint inflammation in some forms of arthritis. [Learn about the benefits of fish.](#)

Talk to your doctor about [alternative therapy and treatments](#) and pain medications for arthritis.