

4 simple ways to stay active

Experts agree: Exercise is one of the best things you can do for osteoarthritis of the knee.

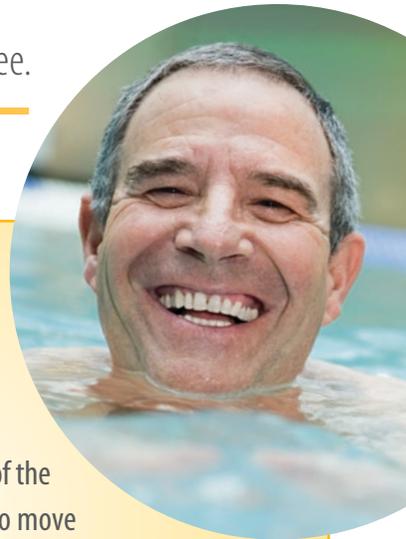
Please check with your physician before starting or changing any exercise/health regimen.

1 Exercise your options

When it comes to your knees not all exercise is created equal. Choosing the right exercise program is important, so don't go it alone. Talk with your doctor or set up a few sessions with a physical therapist. Your doctor will likely recommend that you avoid high impact activities like running and jumping. Luckily there are plenty of low impact workouts that don't put excessive stress on your knees. Good options may include walking, a stationary bike or an elliptical machine.

2 Splash into shape

If traditional workouts sound boring, take to the water and splash your way to fitness. Swimming is great exercise because the buoyancy of the water helps support your joints, making it easier to move them freely. If your swimming skills aren't up to par, just walking in the shallow end of the pool can be a surprising workout. Water offers a natural resistance that helps to strengthen your muscles without putting stress on your joints. Prefer a group activity? Water aerobic classes are another great way to stay active in the water.



4 Give yourself a goal

Get a pedometer and make your walking really count—it's a fun way to keep track of how many steps you take each day. You can set a goal each week, then challenge yourself with a bigger goal the following week. Want to put an extra bounce in your step? Reward yourself with something special once you meet your weekly or monthly goal. Another great way to stay motivated is to sign up for a fundraising walk for the Arthritis Foundation or another favorite charity.

Get Flexible with Tai Chi

Here's an exercise you may not have considered: martial arts. Tai Chi is actually a traditional style of Chinese martial arts using slow, rhythmic movements. Several studies have suggested that this gentle form of exercise can benefit people with knee osteoarthritis. Books and videos are available on Tai Chi, but the best way to start is with a class where you can get more individualized instruction. Classes are available at martial arts studios and also many YMCAs.

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* The Arthritis Foundation® is a great source for exercise programs in your area. Visit www.arthritis.org/programs