

Knee Osteoarthritis

What is osteoarthritis?

Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis, typically affecting any joint, including the knee. The process occurs as we age, causing changes to the joint surface, through inflammation and breaking down of cartilage. Symptoms of osteoarthritis include pain, stiffness, swelling and a grating/grinding sensation.

How can I help myself?

- Take pain relief regularly when needed to allow you to move better.
- Pace your daily activities throughout the day.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Reduce stress levels through meditation, mindfulness and breathing exercises.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Exercise regularly.
- Use a stick/elbow crutch if needed to reduce stress on joints.
- Wear well-fitting shoes with soft thick soles (trainers are ideal especially when exercising).

What medication can be taken to relieve pain?

There are a number of tablets and creams that can help relieve pain and symptoms of osteoarthritis. Your pharmacist can recommend and supply to you some tablets and creams without prescription. If pain still persists it may be helpful to speak to your GP who can discuss other options with you.

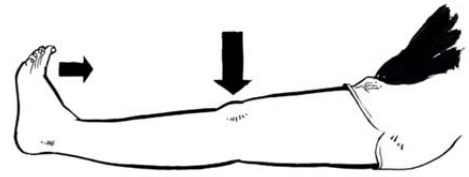
Benefits of exercise for osteoarthritis

Exercise helps to reduce pain, ease stiffness, strengthen muscles and improve overall fitness. Improving general fitness alongside strengthening muscles is important in the management of osteoarthritis. Walking, cycling, swimming, low impact fitness classes such as aerobics, t'ai chi, yoga and pilates are all beneficial.

The following exercises should be started gradually and increased in a comfortable manner.

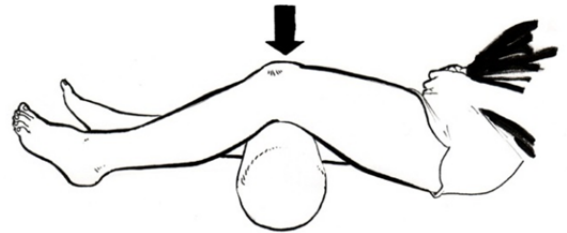
1. Knee push downs

Pull your toes towards you and push your knees against the bed or floor tensing your thigh muscles. Hold for 5 seconds before relaxing. Repeat the exercise until the thigh muscle tires.



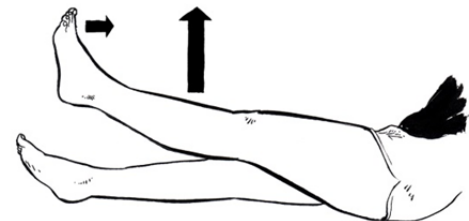
2. Thigh muscle strengthening

Lie with your legs out straight, place a firm cushion or rolled up towel under your affected leg. Lift the lower part of your leg so that your heel lifts off the bed. Hold for 5 seconds before relaxing. Repeat the exercise until the thigh muscle tires.



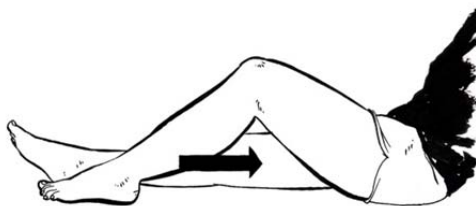
3. Straight leg raise

Straighten your affected leg, pull your toes towards you and lift your leg to about 15cm above the bed, hold for a second then relax. Repeat the exercise until the thigh muscle tires.



4. Active knee flexion

Resting on your bed or sitting in a chair, bend the affected leg as far as possible, hold for a few seconds and relax. Repeat for 5 minutes.



Useful Links:

Here are some videos to help you do your exercises at home; you can find them on the Royal United Hospital Bath website www.ruh.nhs.uk/knee



Static quadriceps contraction/ Straight leg raise/ inner range quadriceps strengthening and medium quadriceps exercises.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyMxWUWNou8>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LEWjkwSyZOQ>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f0lcE98zVHc>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyMxWUWNou8>

For further information: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/osteoarthritis/>

Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital. Email ruh-tr.pals@nhs.net or telephone 01225 825656/ 826319.