

OSTEOARTHRITIS

LESS PAIN, MORE LIVING

SMALL STEPS GUIDE

WHAT IS OSTEOARTHRITIS?

It's when cartilage (the cushiony surface on the ends of bones) wears away, causing pain. It's a chronic condition that often affects the hands, knees, hips and spine with symptoms like swelling, stiffness and inflammation.

How is osteoarthritis (OA) affecting your life right now?

WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?

- **Staying mobile.** Discomfort may tempt you to slow down. But who wants that? You have too much life to enjoy. Managing your OA can help you stay on the move.
- **Controlling pain.** Finding the right combo (stretching, exercise, warm baths, certain meds) is key. With pain under control, you're back on track.
- **Having more energy.** Too often, OA's sidekick is fatigue. Managing pain and improving physical function can help. An energizing thought, isn't it?
- **Enjoying life.** Taking care of yourself helps you keep doing what you like to do: hanging with friends, hiking that trail or ... you name it. It's your fun list!

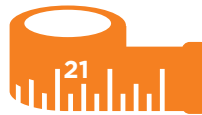
TRY THIS AT HOME

Try a warm bath for 20 minutes, 2 to 3 times a week. (Use safety rails if needed to get in and out of the tub.) Do gentle stretches. Or put a tennis ball between your back or legs and the tub. Roll the ball against tense muscles. Soothing.

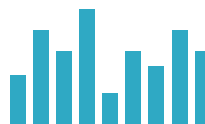
FIVE WAYS TO GET STARTED



Get a move on. Try gentle exercise. It can ease pain without meds. With your healthcare provider's input, be active for 30 minutes, 5 times a week.



Feel the perks of losing pounds. It lowers stress on your joints, is easier on your bones and might even improve flexibility.



Be trendy. Track what you do (eat, exercise, meds) and how you feel (energetic, achy, tired). Talk about the trends with your care provider to make tweaks.



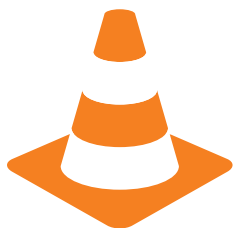
Brace yourself. Looking for a little something to take stress off your leg joints and boost your stability? You might try a knee brace or a cane.



Seek relief. Pain can be managed. Talk to your care provider about options for meds or self-care. Feel like you've tried it all? Maybe a pain clinic can help.

REALLY? I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

- Losing 1 pound of body weight can take 4 pounds of pressure off knees. (So, 10 pounds lost relieves 40 pounds of pressure.)
- OA is the most common type of arthritis, and half of all adults will develop symptoms sometime in their lives.
- Many people with OA think exercise is going to hurt their joints, but the right type of gentle physical activity usually helps them feel better. For example, tai chi specifically designed for arthritis may offer relief of symptoms.
- When it comes to OA in the knee, women have it more often than men do.



PLAN FOR YOUR ROADBLOCKS

We all encounter roadblocks from time to time. Try planning ahead with this technique recommended by personal-change experts: First, envision the benefits of reaching your goal, starting with your personal vision. Then, imagine your biggest roadblocks and how you'll get past them.

ROADBLOCK	STRATEGY
My pain makes me avoid movement.	I'll do gentle exercise because I know I'll feel better later.

WRITE YOUR PERSONAL VISION

Create a short phrase capturing a benefit of managing your OA, whichever benefit is most important to you. Say it anytime you start to veer from your new path.

Example: When I manage my OA well, I can enjoy more activities.

My personal vision

WHO SUPPORTS YOU IN YOUR EFFORTS TOWARD MANAGING YOUR OA?
