

helen to the rescue

Arthritis

Getting Your Moves Back

Arthritis is an umbrella term used to describe inflammation of the joints. There are over 100 different forms of arthritis, common signs are:

- Morning stiffness
- Joint pain or tenderness
- Inability to move a joint in the normal way
- Weakness and joint pain.

Let's explore two common forms, osteoarthritis(OA) and rheumatoid arthritis(RA).

What's the Difference?

OA, the most common form of arthritis, is a degenerative joint disorder. People with OA experience a breakdown of the cartilage that cushions joints causing the bones to rub against each other, exposing small nerves. This causes pain in the hands, hips, knees, neck, and lower back. OA is not symmetrical, one joint is usually worse than the other. It commonly affects older adults or people suffering from obesity, joint deformities, diabetes, gout, or traumatic injuries to the joints.

RA is an autoimmune disease in which the body's immune system mistakenly attacks the joints. Enzymes break down the joint lining and increase inflammation. It works its way from smaller to larger joints. If left untreated can lead to permanent joint damage. Individuals with RA experience fever, fatigue, anemia, and other internal side effects. In contrast to OA, RA is a symmetrical disease, symptoms occur on both sides of the body at the same time.

Moving Away from Pain

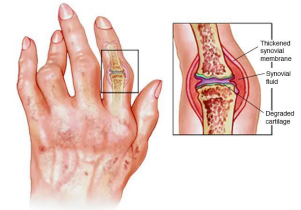
Make lifestyle joint-friendly changes. Exercise and arthritis can and should coexist. People with arthritis who exercise regularly have less pain, more energy, improved sleep, and better day-to-day function. Alternate activities that take a toll on your joints like running for low-impact exercises like walking, biking, or swimming. Weight training will build the muscles that help support your joints. Exercising your core will help prevent falls and other injuries that might damage your joints.

Eat the Good Stuff

Some foods can have a negative impact on your joints; they can trigger inflammation, pain, and swelling. Invest in your health and avoid processed foods and eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Sleep Tight

Make sleep a priority. Lack of quality sleep can make your joint pain worse and can cause depression. Do things to calm you down, like taking a warm bath, sipping a cup of tea, or meditating.



Only your doctor can diagnose whether you have arthritis. Your doctor can help you take steps now to ensure your aging years are happy and pain-free. Pain is more common as we age, but not necessarily a fact of life.



“Life is like an ice cream cone, you have to learn to lick it” – Charlie Brown

Yours in Fitness,
Helen

Helen Pufahl MS, NASM-CPT

Helen's love of fitness began at an early age. She practiced dance, gymnastics as well as track and field. She's an Exercise Physiologist with 35 years of experience. She is also a certified personal trainer, corrective exercise specialist, nutrition consultant, and Senior fitness specialist. Helen is the owner of Unique Health & Fitness.

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