

Arthritis and Exercise

A lot of people are afraid to exercise because they believe that it may cause more problems. However, I always advise my patients that keeping active will help to keep your joints supple, strengthen muscles, reduce stiffness and reduce pain.

Exercise can also help you to improve your fitness, keep your heart healthy, lose weight, (thereby putting less strain on your joints) and strengthen bones which can help with osteoporosis.

It can also have a positive effect on your mood, reduce stress and potentially help you to cope with your condition.

Little and often is generally a good approach to exercise.

There are 3 main types of exercises:

1. Stretching – which helps with stiffness, posture and pain
2. Strengthening – helps muscles support your joints. By developing strong muscles, joints become more stable, and tasks such as walking and climbing stairs become easier.
3. Aerobic – keeps our heart healthy and helps with fatigue. This includes walking, cycling, swimming and doing the housework.

The NHS recommends that adults should undertake a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise (i.e. exercise that makes you a bit short of breath and sweaty) at least five days a week. If you have joint pain, start gently and gradually increase the length of time you are exercising.

If you find it hard to exercise at home, exercise classes can be motivating, due to the interaction with other people and supervision from an instructor.

Gyms offer a way of exercising with the latest equipment. There is sometimes access to a sauna, steam room or jacuzzi, which offer heat benefits to people with arthritis.

Some other types of exercise you can undertake are:

Pilates, which is a series of gentle, controlled movements which target core muscles.

Yoga, which combines exercise, breathing and relaxation. It promotes flexibility and strength in mind, body and spirit.

Tai chi, which is a form of martial art which gently exercises the body, strengthening muscles and freeing up the joints. It also improves energy, fitness and balance.

Lack of time is a common excuse for not exercising. Building an exercise routine into your daily life may take a bit of getting used to but is worth it in the long run.

I have a lot of exercises on my website which can be viewed and downloaded <http://www.hasantahir.com/exercise.php>

I would also suggest viewing the exercise section of a recent free app that I launched (MySpA). <http://www.hasantahir.com/myspa.php>

If, however, you are still concerned about your condition or the effect of exercise, please contact me for an appointment, by either visiting my website <http://www.hasantahir.com> or by calling my secretary on 0207 123 4596.

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