

Strategies to Promote Joint Health

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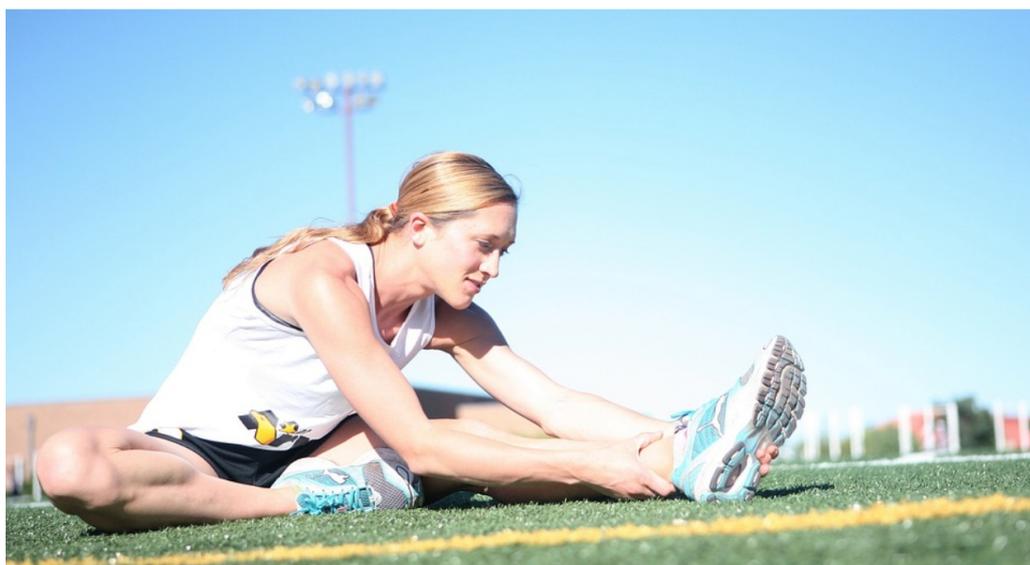


Health

by Rae Steinbach

Joint pain and discomfort can become a major concern in our lives as we age, with 15 million Americans suffering from severe joint pain as a result of arthritis. It's therefore extremely important to take joint care seriously from a younger age in order to maximize our health throughout our lives.

More severe or persistent symptoms may warrant medical attention. You may also feel the need to get direct access to physical therapy to mitigate these symptoms, but there are many easier treatment methods you can try yourself if your joint pain flares up. These joint care strategies can help mitigate your pain and allow you to maintain your lifestyle without being affected by your symptoms.



Maintain a Healthy Weight

Arthritis is caused by a number of factors, but obesity increases the risk of being affected along with the severity of symptoms. Being overweight or obese has a negative influence on a wide variety of things related to physical and mental health, so managing your weight should be a top priority.

Your joints play an important role in supporting your body weight in every position, so excess weight can lead to unnecessary strain and eventually chronic pain. Focus on keeping a healthy diet and getting regular exercise in order to maximize your long-term mobility and comfort.

Arthritis and Your Diet

Specific nutrients such as omega-3, antioxidants, and protein play an especially key role in joint health. This delicious recipe for amaranth porridge calls for ingredients containing each of these nutrients along with other important minerals such as magnesium and calcium.

Some people with arthritis choose to take nutritional supplements in addition to improving the health of their diet. Common examples of bone- and joint-promoting supplements include vitamin D, green tea, and glucosamine, which can help your body keep your joints comfortable.

Stop Smoking

Like an unhealthy weight, smoking or otherwise consuming tobacco products, especially over a long period of time, leads to a range of negative health outcomes. This includes a higher risk of developing rheumatoid arthritis. If you currently smoke, talk to your doctor about quitting (and if you've never smoked, keep it that way).

Tobacco can cause deterioration in the joints as well as a lower bone mineral density. Your bones will, therefore, weaken over time, leaving you more susceptible to injuries like breaks and fractures, which become especially problematic, as we get older.

Try Alternative Remedies

If you haven't found as much success with traditional arthritis treatments, you may benefit from looking elsewhere. While studies on acupuncture have produced conflicting results, some people find that it reduces their arthritic symptoms and gives them a better quality of life.

When seeking acupuncture or other alternative treatments, it's important to find a certified and licensed practitioner that you can trust. Meditation and other forms of mindfulness therapy may also ameliorate symptoms and remove any stressors that are aggravating your pain.

Keep Your Joints Strong with Regular Exercise and Stretching

Maintaining a healthy exercise routine improves both your circulation and your overall muscle mass, both of which can help relieve the stress on your joints. Muscles are able to take on some of the strain that would otherwise be left with the joints, which can help reduce symptoms of chronic pain.

If you're managing particularly severe or persistent symptoms, it may be worth consulting a physical therapist to help manage your pain. They can recommend exercises specifically designed to improve joint health which you can use to supplement your own routine. Even less vigorous forms of exercise can have a substantial impact on your joint health.

Stretching helps keep your joints limber and decrease the severity of your symptoms. You can improve your neck strength, for example, by stretching your head toward a shoulder for five to ten seconds before switching to the other. You should attempt to stretch for at least 15 minutes each day.

Improve Your Posture

When you slouch or slump while standing or sitting, your body weight puts an uneven strain on different areas of your body that can lead to discomfort and pain over time. Try to stand and sit up straight in order to feel more comfortable. It may feel strange

that first, but it will become more natural over time.

Taking care of your joints is important to your overall health and will have a substantial impact on your comfort as you age. Start with these tips and consider seeking medical advice from a doctor or physical therapists if your symptoms worsen or fail to go away after a long period of time.

About author

Rae Steinbach is a graduate of Tufts University with a combined International Relations and Chinese degree. After spending time living and working abroad in China, she returned to NYC to pursue her career and continue curating quality content. Rae is passionate about travel, food, and writing, of course.