

# Exercising with Osteoarthritis

## Understanding exercise and osteoarthritis (OA)

- Most people with OA may experience pain, stiffness and swelling
- Exercise can help improve these symptoms whilst not exercising can mean ongoing pain, stiffness and weakness
- Adapting to living with some pain can be one of the hardest parts of OA
- Being active will not cause OA to worsen in severity



**Research shows  
exercise is essential  
for helping  
osteoarthritis**



**People with hip and  
knee OA who  
exercise find it is  
easier to do things**

## Top tips to manage exercise and pain

- Plan your daily activities into shorter sessions, allowing for rest periods spaced throughout the day
- A longer warm up and gradual cool down can help minimise pain during exercises
- Exercise at times during the day when your pain is less severe
- Exercise with others to distract you from the feeling of pain and help keep you going
- Take medications as directed by your health team
- To help manage pain – try some relaxed breathing or meditation, over the counter anti-inflammatory topical gels or creams and tablets
- Add in some heat or cold treatments – experiment with what works best for you

**Setbacks and flare ups will happen –  
have a plan to manage them so you  
can keep exercising and live well!**

**Don't let bad days  
stop you – think about  
your life goals – why  
moving is important  
to you**