

Osteoarthritis of the knee

Advice and treatment

Osteoarthritis is an extension of the body's repair process, which takes place in joints which are stressed or injured. Sometimes, but not always, it can cause pain and stiffness.

Signs and symptoms

The condition presents differently in different individuals, but common symptoms can include:

- **Pain** – particularly with weight bearing activities, or at the end of the day
- **Stiffness** – especially first thing in the morning, or after prolonged rest. This often eases with movement of the joint
- **Swelling**
- **Weakness** – often associated with weakness in the muscles of the thigh and hip, generally due to reducing activity levels
- **Crepitus** – a creaking sensation when moving the joint – but also keep in mind this sensation is often normal in healthy joints

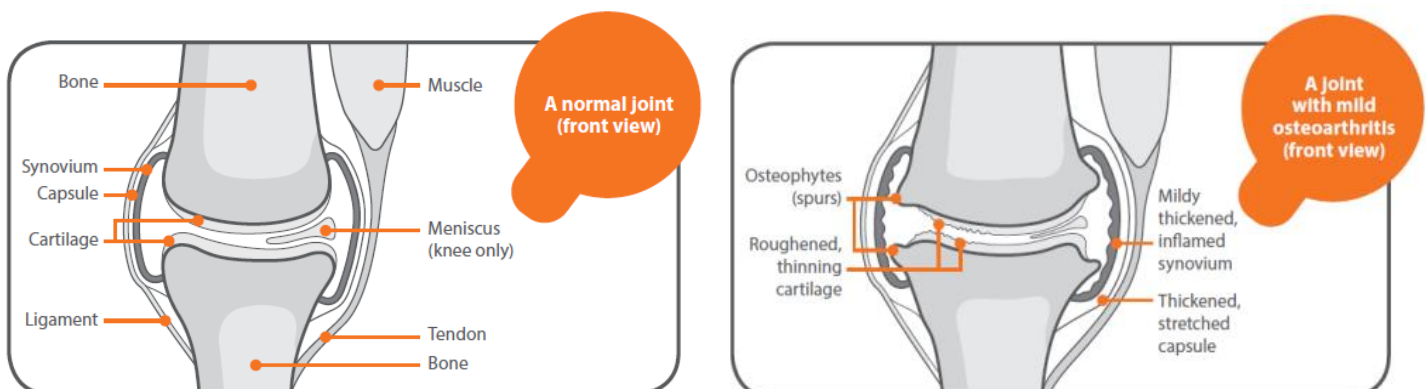
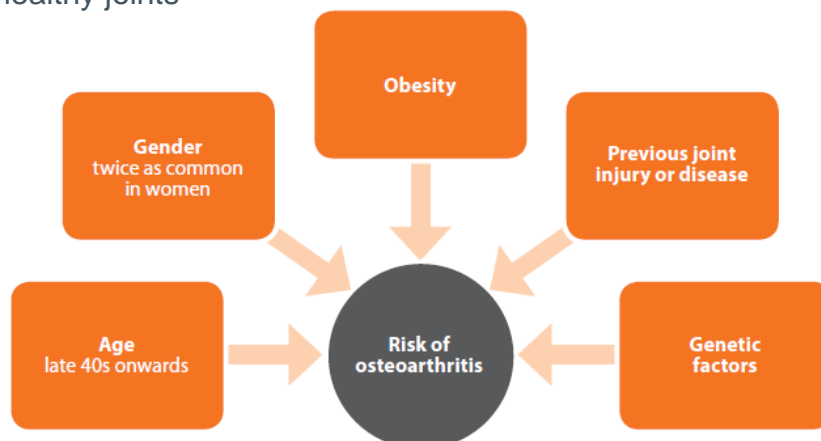










Diagram from Arthritis Research UK

What can you do to help your knee

Whilst there is no known cure for Osteoarthritis, there is a lot you can do to improve your symptoms.

Strengthening exercises

Improving the strength of the muscles that support your joints can reduce pain and improve your function and mobility. This leaflet has some examples, but ask your Physiotherapist for exercises to suit your needs.

 	ACTIVE KNEE FLEXION Slowly bend and extend your knee as far as your pain allows, repeating little and often throughout the day. Note this exercise can be performed standing, seated or lying down.
	SEATED KNEE EXTENSION Sitting on a table with your knees over the edge, straighten your leg as far as you can. Use your other leg to assist the movement if necessary. Lower and repeat.
 	STRAIGHT-LEG RAISE Lie on your back with one leg bent and the other straight. Raise your leg until your ankle is in line with your bent knee. Pause briefly, then slowly lower your leg. Relax and repeat
 	CHAIR ASSISTED SQUATS Stand in front of a chair with your feet hip-width apart. Squat down as if to sit down on the chair but before you touch the seat, stand up again. Repeat.
	BODY-WEIGHT SQUATS With your feet a shoulder-width apart, squat down, ensuring your knees glide over your second toes.

The exercise diagrams have been created by The Rehab Lab.

Visit Rehab Lab website TheRehabLab.com/

There are other self-management methods you can follow to improve your symptoms, and reduce the pain and stiffness:

- **Weight management** – being overweight puts stress on weight-bearing joints like your knees, which can increase your chances of developing Osteoarthritis and similar symptoms. Losing just 10% of your weight can improve symptoms and function by as much as 50%
- **Pacing your activities** – plan and break up the activities that involve heavy loading on your joints, and take regular breaks. This doesn't mean avoiding activities completely, as this can cause further muscle weakness to develop. Focus on resting once your joint becomes painful and continue the activity when you can
- **Motion is lotion** – our joints naturally produce their own lubrication, known as synovial fluid. Regularly, full range movement of your joints, such as your knees, helps ease both the stiffness and pain associated with the condition
- **Aerobic exercises** – regular exercise that raises your heart rate and makes your short of breath can help your sleep better, improve your general health, and help reduce pain by stimulating the release of pain-relieving hormones called endorphins
- **Tablets and creams** – your GP or Pharmacist can advise you about suitable medications that may improve the symptoms of Osteoarthritis.

You can find more information about osteoarthritis on the NHS website.

Visit NHS website [nhs.uk/conditions/osteoarthritis/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/osteoarthritis/)

How to contact us

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