



# Clinic Newsletter

## Managing Arthritis

*Most recent evidence-based recommendations*

### Exercise is most important

Guidelines released by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) to GPs recommend that patients suffering from osteoarthritis take regular exercise that helps to strengthen muscles.

Arthritis accelerates normal wear and tear of joint surfaces (cartilage). This disrupts the normal position of the joint and leads to muscle imbalance. The pain associated with arthritis tends to lead to over-protection of the joint - you avoid using the joint e.g. walking less, stopping sport activities. Unfortunately this means the muscles around the joint get weaker and this actually puts more strain on the joint itself. Not only that, but you are more likely to put on weight which increases the strain on your back and legs.

A recent study into the benefits of exercise for osteoarthritis sufferers found that there was a long-term *reduction in pain levels*, although in the short-term they may experience an increase in pain associated with the exercise. The study at East Carolina University found that although patients on supervised exercise programmes experienced increased pain in the initial weeks after starting the exercise programme, the pain tended to abate in the evenings and so long as they worked through this "pain hump", the increased pain experience was likely to be short-lived.

Osteopathic treatment helps in managing the pain associated with arthritis by releasing strains and stresses that have accumulated in the body over many years, thus improving mobility and the circulation to all parts of the body as well as improving circulation, strength and mobility of the painful joint.

This should make it easier for you to exercise.

Naturopathic medicine can help the body heal itself from the inside by looking at diet, nutrition and lifestyle. There are a huge amount of different supplements and gadgets on the market that claim to ease the pain of arthritis. A naturopath can help identify ones that may be useful for you.

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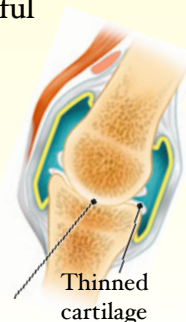
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## Arthritis Exercise Recommendations

*Take regular exercise*

- build up gradually over several days or weeks to keep discomfort to a minimum
- walking is excellent for back, hips and knees
- use good walking shoes or boots
- for very inflamed and painful joints, hydrotherapy exercise e.g. gentle swimming may be more comfortable
- for arthritic shoulders, wrists or hands: avoid very painful movements or activities but continue to use the joint as normally as possible.



### Recent Medical Advances

Following a breakthrough in stem cell research, scientists at the University of Bristol have given arthritis sufferers new hope for an effective treatment. Professor Anthony Hollander and his team at Southmead Hospital have successfully grown human cartilage from a patient's own stem cells for the first time ever. This means that people suffering from osteoarthritis could in the future have cartilage transplant operations.

No Smoking day

Helping smokers who want to quit

Wednesday 12 March 2008

As any ex-smokers will testify, quitting smoking can be a really tough challenge. This year's No Smoking Day is an acknowledgment of that challenge.

Whether quitting alone or as part of a group, **The Great No Smoking Day Challenge** ([www.nosmokingday.org.uk](http://www.nosmokingday.org.uk)) helps individual participants become part of a bigger challenge and a national event.

No Smoking Day is here to help those smokers that want to quit; research shows as many as three in every four smokers want to quit, and

even more wish they'd never started to begin with.

You can get help with stopping smoking including counselling and nicotine replacement therapy on prescription from you GP practice.

Alternatively you can get naturopathic advice including nutritional and herbal support alongside NLP therapy. Call the clinic on 07966 243459 for more details or to make an appointment.



## Good breathing technique

*I thought it would be appropriate, having No Smoking Day this month, to look at good breathing technique. I find that many people do not breathe well. This can be due to smoking (smokers tend to have very shallow breathing due to using the upper chest and throat, to draw on a cigarette), but poor breathing technique is often related to poor posture, stress (stress tends to lead to shoulder tension which restricts good rib mobility), neck, back or rib pain or injury, asthma or indigestion.*

Breathing is involuntary – it should 'just happen'!

Many states of dysfunction in the body can be caused or aggravated by poor, forced or ineffective breathing, in fact often it is not breathing out enough air (carbon dioxide) which is the problem, not breathing in too little air (oxygen).

Trying too hard to breathe in causes

- excess muscle tension in the neck and back
- excess carbon dioxide in the lungs
- aggravates panic attacks, asthma attacks, emphysema, indigestion, tight chest associated with infections and bronchitis
- Focus on breathing out

At first it is helpful to practise in the semi-supine position

1. Lying on back with knees bent, feet flat on floor or bed, head on enough pillow to be comfortable and relaxed for your whole spine.
2. Breathe out through your mouth (lips slightly pursed to make a 'whoosh' sound).
3. Allow your neck to be free and your spine to lengthen.
4. Allow your lower ribs to move down and in, feel your lower abdominal muscles tighten and draw in.
5. Close your mouth and let yourself breathe in through your nose
6. The natural suction effect caused by breathing out will allow air to flow automatically back in to your lungs



### SAFE IN OUR HANDS CERTIFICATION MARK

The Certification Mark 'Safe in our hands' shows that osteopaths are registered with the General Osteopathic Council. The title 'Osteopath' is protected by law in the UK. The General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) was set up under The Osteopaths Act 1993 and is one of the 13 UK health and social care statutory regulators. The regulators are set up to protect the public so that whenever a member of the public visits a health or social care professional, they can be sure they meet the required standards.