

# Knee Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis is caused by wear of joint cartilage. It is age-related and being overweight exacerbates the condition. It can be painful, especially when going down stairs or getting up from a low seat or moving after being still for a long period (when you first get up in the morning, etc.).

## What can be done?

**Do not overload your knees.** Do not strain yourself when they hurt. When you are in the painful stage, avoid walking too much or using stairs. Wait for the pain to improve before going back to normal activity.

Take short **rests** during the day. Use a **cane** in the hand opposite the knee that is most affected; it will relieve the pain and help you to feel more stable. Knee braces may make symptoms worse due to the pressure applied, although some people feel more secure wearing them.

Sit in **high chairs with arm rests**. Getting up will be easier.

Do not kneel or squat.

Wear shoes that are comfortable and supportive, with good cushioning. Do not wear high heels.

If you are overweight, losing some weight will help relieve the strain.

If your knee is swollen, apply a cold pack to ease the pain.

You can take **analgesics** such as paracetamol or, in some cases, anti-inflammatory drugs (always check with your GP).

In very painful and disabling cases, your doctor may recommend knee replacement surgery.

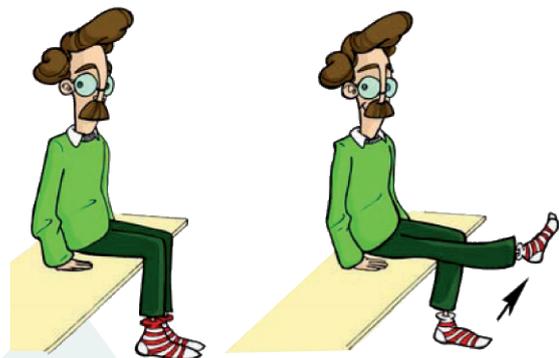
## Rehabilitation exercises:

If you follow an exercise program, your **strength, endurance and knee function will improve. It will also help reduce the pain** and can be as effective as taking anti-inflammatories.

**Walk** on level ground or cycle, dance, swim, work out in the pool, etc. on a regular basis. Do so as long as it doesn't hurt. Gradually increase the time spent on exercising to 45-60 minutes 3 to 5 days a week.

It is essential to keep **moving, stretching and strengthening** your arthritic joints daily to keep them flexible and strong.

**While sitting on a table, extend your leg.** When you can do it easily, add some ankle weights.



Then wiggle your toes back and forth.

Lie on your back, legs **straight**. **Point your toes toward your head**, firmly pressing your knee against the floor.

