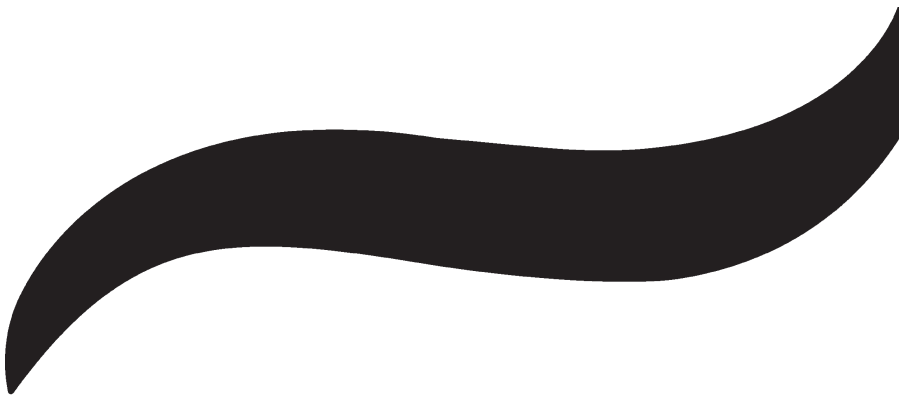




# Hip Osteoarthritis

Information for patients  
Physiotherapy



# WHAT IS HIP OSTEOARTHRITIS?

Hip osteoarthritis is a common cause of joint pain of the lower extremity and can cause varying degrees of limitations.

Osteoarthritis is a long term condition that can affect one or more joints in the body and over time cause pain, stiffness, decreased range of movement in the joint and weakness of the muscles around the joint. It happens when there is breakdown of the cartilage in the joint which causes joint space narrowing. Some people report mild symptoms where as other people may find their symptoms are severe. Osteoarthritis can affect people of all ages but is more common with people aged 40 and over.

## WHY DOES IT OCCUR?

The exact cause of osteoarthritis is unknown, however it is likely that a combination of factors may contribute such as:

- ❖ Previous joint injury
- ❖ Age related changes
- ❖ Family history
- ❖ Being overweight
- ❖ Female gender

## **HOW COMMON IS IT?**

In the UK approximately 8.5 million people have painful joints secondary to osteoarthritis. Osteoarthritis is more common in women and people in the older age groups. It is estimated that around 10% of people over the age of 45 years in Scotland have osteoarthritis of the hip.

## **WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?**

Pain in or around the hip joint and groin area. Morning pain and stiffness. A reduction in the “smoothness” of a joint and a reduced range of movement. People often experience some difficulty with tasks such as walking, getting up from a chair and getting in and out of a car.

## **WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP WITH THE CONDITION?**

Unfortunately there is no cure for hip osteoarthritis however there are many strategies that can be tried to manage and help your symptoms.

- 1) Footwear - The use of appropriate footwear may help with shock absorbency of the hip joint which can help reduce pain. High heels or wedge typed footwear are discouraged due to not allowing for an even weight distribution.
- 2) Positioning - Avoid sitting in low chairs as this can be more difficult to stand up from. Crossing legs is not advised due to causing a strain in the hip joint. Placing a pillow or cushion in-between your legs in side sleeping can help reduce pain by maintaining a neutral position. Similarly placing a pillow under your knees when lying on your back may also increase comfort.
- 3) Assistive devices (walking aids) - there are many different walking aids available which can aid a person struggling with their mobility. A physiotherapy assessment will help to provide the correct walking aid for you, for example a walking stick or crutch can help ease the pressure of hip pain when walking.

# WHAT ARE YOUR OTHER TREATMENT OPTIONS?

## **Physiotherapy**

Regular stretching and exercise can help keep joints lubricated and supple. Exercise can also help build-up the muscles which support your joints and improve your balance and co-ordination.

Below are some mixed level exercises that may help to move and strengthen your joint which can reduce pain long term. Completing these exercises daily is encouraged in order to give the joint a chance to adjust.

Additional physiotherapy intervention may be required but these exercises are a good starting point. Not all exercises may suit everyone, therefore it is important to begin with the easiest and progress as able.

## Physiotherapy Exercises - Early

Lie on your back, for example your bed with your legs straight in front of you gently slide your heel towards your bottom bending your knee and hip. Slowly return to starting position and repeat this up to 10 times. This may be increased up to 3 sets as pain allows. Complete this exercise 1 to 2 times per day.



Lie on your back for example your bed with your legs straight, then push your knee downwards in to the bed contracting your thigh muscle, this should make the muscle at the front of your thigh tight. Hold for 5 seconds and then relax. Repeat this up to 10 times. This may be increased up to 3 sets as pain allows. Complete this exercise 1 to 2 times per day.



## Physiotherapy Exercises - Middle

Lying on your back with knees bent and feet hip-width apart. Draw in your tummy muscles and tighten your buttocks. Tilt your pelvis backwards and raise your hips upwards off the floor and hold the position for 5 seconds. Gradually relax back to starting position. Repeat this 5 to 10 times. This may be increased up to 3 sets as pain allows. Complete this exercise 1 to 2 times per day.



Stand holding on to a stable surface, for example a chair or countertop, taking the weight off of one leg and keeping it straight, lift your leg out to the side and then return to starting position. Try to keep your body upright throughout. Repeat this up to 10 times each side. This may be increased up to 3 sets as pain allows. Complete this exercise 1 to 2 times per day.



Stand holding on to a stable surface, for example a chair or countertop, take the weight out of your leg and while keeping your leg straight, lift your leg backwards then return to starting position. Try to keep your body upright throughout the movement. Repeat this up to 10 times each side. This may be increased up to 3 sets as pain allows. Complete this exercise 1 to 2 times per day





## Physiotherapy Exercises - Late

Stand holding on to a stable surface for example a chair or countertop with your feet shoulder width apart, slightly bend your knees, pushing your hips backwards whilst keeping your heels on the floor. Return slowly to starting position and repeat up 10 times. This may be increased up to 3 sets as pain allows. Complete this exercise 1 to 2 times per day.



Stand in front of a step for example your staircase. Step up and down 10 times alternating your legs and remember you can use support if required. This may be increased up to 3 sets as pain allows. Complete this exercise 1 to 2 times per day



## **LIFESTYLE ADAPTATIONS**

With any on-going conditions you may need to make some changes to your regular activities to make life easier. Here are some suggestions:

### **Washing and Dressing**

Non-slip bat mats, rails, bath boards or seats may make getting washed easier. If you struggle to get on and off the toilet a raised toilet seat or grab rail may be of use. Consider the layout of your toiletries and avoid having to stretch to reach items.

Getting dressed is easier in a seated position. There are various tools on the market that may help with dressing for example a long handled shoe horn.

### **Sleep and Posture**

If you have one side that is painful try to avoid sleeping on the affected side especially with neck, shoulder or hip pain. You might find it helpful to use extra pillows to support your arms or legs.

If sitting try not to spend too long in one position. We recommend moving every 20 minutes. Consider the height of your chair and sit in a higher chair if you struggle to get up from sitting. Armchairs may be better than a sofa as you will have arm support.

### **Housework and Garden**

Try not to attempt too many tasks in one day. Avoid spending too long doing repetitive activities such as cleaning windows and hoovering. You could try sitting down to iron.

In the garden try to vary the jobs so you don't spend too long in one position.

## Shopping and Driving

Take a trolley rather than a basket even if you are only needing a few items as this will give you more support and avoid you having to carry heavy objects. Try to break up longer journeys, get out and stretch your legs regularly.

If you live in Lanarkshire more advice on solutions to help you with activities of daily living can be found here:

- ❖ [www.makinglifeeasier.org.uk](http://www.makinglifeeasier.org.uk)
- ❖ <http://www.careinfoscotland.scot/topics/care-at-home/equipment-and-adaptionstelecare/>

## Pacing and Spacing

Pacing and spacing methods can help you manage your pain better.

- ❖ Pacing is the term used for breaking down an activity or task. This can be done by taking regular breaks. Prioritising daily activities can also help. This can prevent “over stimulating” your pain system.
- ❖ When completing challenging tasks or activities, it may be useful to set a “baseline”. This is the amount you can manage on a good or bad day without increasing your symptoms. Therefore you can plan rests and set achievable goals.

## Pain activity Ladder

By following the pain activity ladder which can be seen below, you can identify activities that you would consider severely painful, moderately painful and mildly irritating and act to change your habits.

- ❖ The pain scale, most often used in medicine, measures pain from 0-10 (zero being no pain and 10 representing the worst pain you could imagine).
- ❖ If you can identify the level of pain you are experiencing, you will find out if you are in the green, amber or red zone. The best way to move down to the green zone is by pacing and spacing your activity.
- ❖ When you are completing your rehabilitation exercises it is often best to work within the green and sometimes amber zones both during the exercises and within 48 hours of completing your exercises. If you find yourself in the red zone you are likely pushing yourself too hard and may flare up the pain.



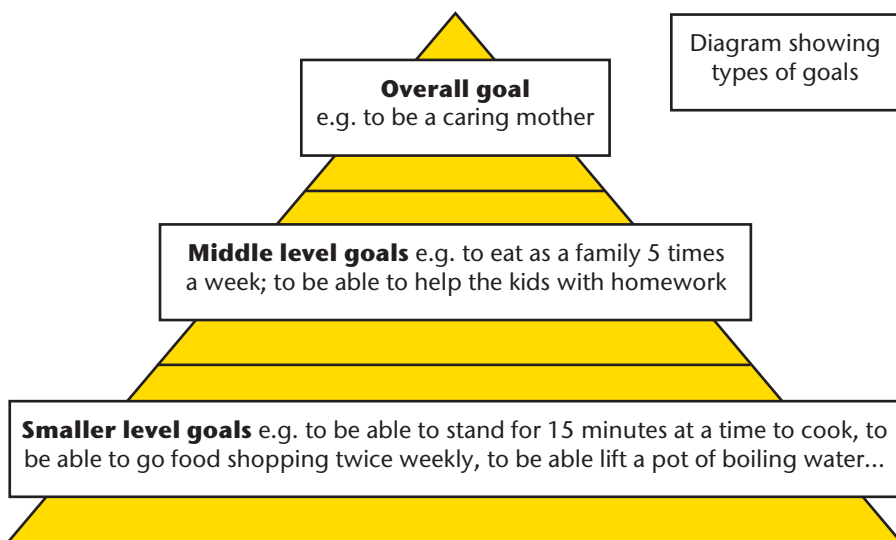
## Setting Goals

### **Why should I set goals for myself?**

When you have had pain for a long time, this can become mixed up in a number of ways. For example, low mood, loss of strength, poor sleep, less ability, worries, difficulty in relationships, stiffness and difficulties with everyday tasks. This can often lead to a lack of direction in life and losing sight of what is important and what you are aiming for. It can lead to losing sight of personal values and what you want to achieve.

It is realistic and, in fact, recommended, for you to set realistic goals. This provides motivation and direction for management.

The goals that you set for yourself should be important to you. If they are as meaningful as possible to you then they will provide you with the motivation to achieve them.



## WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

A good indicator of whether you need to lose weight is your body mass index (BMI). You can check this here: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/bmi-calculator/>



If your BMI states you are overweight or obese it is likely that losing weight will reduce your symptoms.

Carrying extra fat also increases your risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and some cancers. Reducing your portion sizes and eating a balanced diet can be helpful in reducing weight. Click on this link for NHS inform's online free 12-week weight management programme to get you started right away.

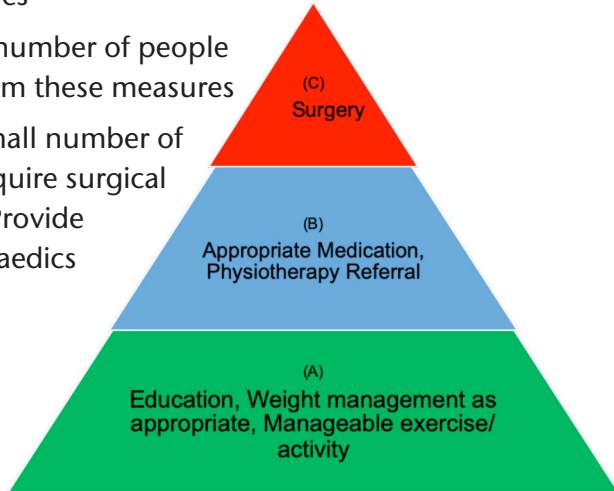
<https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/12-week-weight-management-programme#Week1>

If you need a little more help and feel that you would benefit from working with others in group sessions, NHS Lanarkshire's Weigh to Go programme will help you become more active, eat well and lead a healthier lifestyle. Follow this link for Weight-to-go groups in North and South Lanarkshire <https://www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk/weigh-to-go/>

## Treatment Triangle

For Musculoskeletal conditions the majority of people do not require surgery and simple basic treatment is recommended:

- (A) GREEN: The majority of people will be benefit from these simple measures
- (B) BLUE: A large number of people will benefit from these measures
- (C) RED: A very small number of people will require surgical intervention. Provide link to Orthopaedics once ready.



## Analgesia

- ❖ Analgesia also known as pain relief can be an important part in helping you manage your symptoms and allow you to stay active.
- ❖ Taking the right kind of pain relief regularly allows you to move more normally and continue your usual activities without causing any damage. Pain relief won't always stop your pain completely. For this reason, we use the term pain relief (A 30-50% reduction in pain would be a good success).
- ❖ Pain relievers/anti-inflammatory medications can be used as advised by your GP or Pharmacist. If you feel the ones you usually take are not helping your pain or you have any side effects from your medicines, please speak to your GP or pharmacist.

## WHAT DO I DO IF MY SYMPTOMS FLARE UP?

Flare ups of pain are common.

Some people have recurrent flare ups of pain so it is important to know how best to manage these flare ups. In most cases a pain flare-up will settle within 6 weeks.

### Top tips

- ❖ You will likely find it helpful to rest a bit more but it is still important to keep active. This will help to avoid becoming stiff and your muscles becoming weak.
- ❖ If you aim to get a balance between rest and activity it should help your pain to settle down. You may be sore at first, however, start slowly and gradually increase the amount you do.
- ❖ Avoiding movements or tasks that aggravate your symptoms can also help especially in the early days
- ❖ Adopting positions or movements that reduce your pain can be useful



## Corticosteroid Injection

Occasionally a consultant orthopedic surgeon may consider a corticosteroid injection for hip OA. These injections can only be done in hospital in theatre and by the consultant themselves.

Corticosteroids may not always 'cure' or take all of the pain away but can be tried to ease symptoms. An injection may be useful in the following situations:

- ❖ During severe arthritis pain when a person may be going through an arthritis 'flare up'.
- ❖ To provide pain relief for a person to participate in activity or exercises. This can often give a window of opportunity for someone to participate in rehabilitation.
- ❖ To postpone surgery for people who want to avoid this or are unable to get surgery due to health reasons. Injection may allow them to live with less pain.

Steroid injections should generally be used along with other treatments as they are not the best way to manage long term symptoms of osteoarthritis. Steroid injections usually only last a maximum of few months.

## **SURGERY**

Surgery may be considered if you have tried all non-surgical treatments. Surgery is usually deemed as a last resort with only 10%-15% of people with osteoarthritis requiring surgery. The aim of surgery would be to improve your quality of life. A total hip replacement is the most common surgical option for hip osteoarthritis.

### **When to speak to a health professional?**

If your symptoms continue to worsen or do not show signs of improvement after a period of 6-12 weeks of following the advice above, a self-referral to physiotherapy can be made on our website: <https://www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk/services/physiotherapy-msk> or via your GP.





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