



OSTEOARTHRITIS OF THE HIP

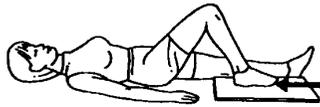
What is Osteoarthritis: Osteoarthritis is a disease that affects the joints of the body. 'Osteo' means bone, and 'arthritis' means joint inflammation.

The surface of the joint becomes damaged and the surrounding bone grows thicker, resulting in pain and inflammation. Other words used to describe this condition include 'degenerative joint disease', and 'wear and tear'. Osteoarthritis of the hip is a very common form of osteoarthritis.

How does it develop: To understand how arthritis develops you need to know how a normal joint works. The hip joint is where the socket of the pelvis, and the ball of the thigh bone (femur) come together. The end of each bone is covered by a smooth slippery surface called cartilage. The cartilage allows the joint to move freely without friction. When a joint develops arthritis, the cartilage gradually roughens and becomes thin. The surrounding bone reacts by growing thicker, and bone at the edges will grow outwards and form bony spurs (osteophytes). When the joint surfaces roughen, pain and swelling are produced.

Diagnosis: Your doctor can usually make a diagnosis by using clinical tests and looking for grating, and muscle wasting around the hip and buttocks. To confirm the diagnosis an X-ray is often required. Although this helps in confirming diagnosis it is often not a good reflection of the difficulties you experience. A bad X-ray does not necessarily mean a lot of pain or disability

3. Lying on your back with a sliding board under your leg.

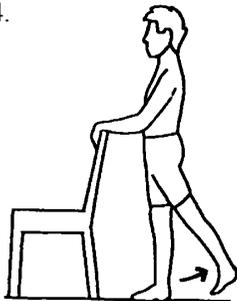


Bend and straighten your hip and knee by sliding your foot up and down the board.

Repeat 20 times

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4. Stand straight holding on to a chair.

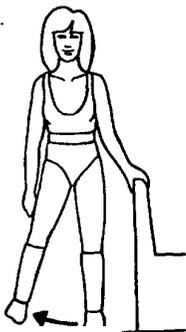


Bring your leg backwards keeping your knee straight. Do not lean forwards.

Repeat 10-15 times

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5. Stand straight holding on to a support.



Lift your leg sideways and bring it back keeping your trunk straight throughout the exercise.

Repeat 10 – 15 times

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REMEMBER: Exercises should be performed slowly and controlled. A little pain is OK when exercising but pain should not linger for more than 30 minutes. Decrease repetitions or stop the exercises if pain lingers.

Symptoms: People with osteoarthritis of the hip joint usually complain of pain around the groin area. Your hip may also feel stiff at certain times. The pain is usually better when you rest. You will probably find that your pain will vary, and changes in the weather may make a difference. Other symptoms you may experience are, grating, muscle weakness, locking and giving way.

Treatment: There are no cures for osteoarthritis. But there are many treatments that aim to reduce discomfort and pain, reduce stiffness, and help minimise any further damage to the joint.

- **Medication:** At the moment there are no drugs which affect how osteoarthritis develops. But some medication can help with the symptoms such as anti-inflammatory cream, and pain relievers. Use of stronger anti-inflammatory tablets would need to be discussed with your doctor..

- **Surgery:** Most people with osteoarthritis of the hip will never need surgery, but in severe cases joint replacement operations can be performed.

- **Self-treatment:** There are a number things you can do yourself to reduce symptoms.

- Ensure that you do not keep your hip bent in the same position for long periods.

- Wear cushioned training shoes, as these act as a shock absorber.

- Use a stick to take the weight off the joint if you need to, but keep moving!

- Keep your hip warm. It can help to relieve pain and stiffness. A hot water bottle can be helpful

- Use a hand rail for support when climbing stairs. Go upstairs one at a time with your good leg first. Come downstairs with your bad leg first followed by good.

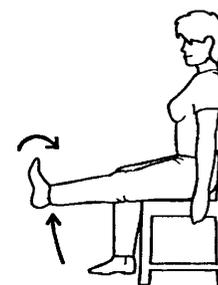
Rest or Exercise?

Joints do not wear out with normal use. In general, it is much better to use them than not to! However most people with osteoarthritis find that while too much exercise worsens their pain, too much rest stiffens them up. Find a balance. The best advice for most people is little and often.

As mentioned previously, osteoarthritis of the hip can lead to stiffness and weakness of the quadriceps muscles and also the muscles around the buttock and groin. The weaker the muscles around the joint, the less support the joint has, and the more painful it gets. It is therefore important to perform some specific exercises to maintain strength and mobility, and thereby reduce pain.

These are outlined below. Exercises should be performed in short spells regularly throughout the day, rather than performing them all in one session. Attempt to perform all exercises about 3 times per day.

Exercises



Sit on a chair.

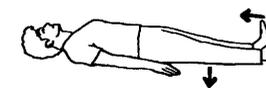
Pull your toes up, tighten your thigh muscle and straighten your knee. Hold approx. 5 secs. and slowly relax your leg.

Repeat ___ times.

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2.

Lying on your back with legs straight.



Bend your ankles and push your knees down firmly against the bed. Hold 5 secs. - relax.

Repeat 10 times

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