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# OSTEOARTHRITIS AND YOU...

...there are things we can do!



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**NIHR** | National Institute for  
Health and Care Research

Keele  
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Impact Accelerator Unit



**PEP-OA**

Developing and testing a  
Patient Explanation Package  
for OsteoArthritis




## What is osteoarthritis? What causes it?

- A condition which affects the whole joint and surrounding muscles.
- Over time, our joints naturally wear and then repair themselves. Osteoarthritis occurs when there is more wear than repair.



## How does osteoarthritis affect people?

- Osteoarthritis can affect your joints in different ways at different times. Sometimes you may not have any difficulties but at other times you might.
  - No two people are alike. Levels of joint pain can be affected by different things. For example, your level of activity, experiencing an injury or trauma, as well as how you are feeling can affect pain.
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## How should I start increasing activity and what should I expect?

- Increase activity gradually. It can be easier to keep moving if you build up from where you are now.
- Put new activities to improve your osteoarthritis in to your daily routine.
- Keeping active and maintaining a healthy weight are best for your osteoarthritis in the long run, even though some social activities can make this difficult.
- Creaking or crunching in your joints when you move does not mean you are causing harm. Short-lived pain from new or increased activity should guide but not stop you and will lessen over time. Noticing this improvement can help you to stay motivated.



## What benefits might I see?

- Maintaining a healthy weight and keeping active are the best ways of managing your osteoarthritis. These actions can reduce pain, increase strength and movement, and improve your physical and mental health.

## What happens to osteoarthritis over time, and can it be improved?



- You can take steps to improve your osteoarthritis, by:
  - being physically active,
  - maintaining a healthy weight,
  - thinking positively.
- Taking steps like these can help how you feel and what you can do now, and may help to avoid the need for more treatments in future. Support is available to help you to achieve this.

## What should I do?



- Osteoarthritis will not always get worse and there are things you can do to manage it over time.
- Having a positive view of the future may reduce the difficulties you have from your osteoarthritis.

Watch our animation here <https://youtu.be/6iz78WMm-Lo>



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Some people have found the following websites helpful...

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/osteoarthritis/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/osteoarthritis/)

[www.versusarthritis.org](http://www.versusarthritis.org)

[www.beefree.org.uk](http://www.beefree.org.uk)



If you want to comment on this leaflet to make it better, please fill in our brief survey:

<https://healthsurvey.hfac.keele.ac.uk/index.php/823996?lang=en>



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