

Well Being

Stillpoint Rehabilitation & Wellness, LLC

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Limiting the Impact of Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis, also called degenerative joint disease, occurs to some degree in all of us as we age. As we go through life, our joints accumulate evidence of wear; on x-ray, this evidence includes decreased joint space, thickening of bones where they meet to form a joint, and even bone spurs.

The goal for all of us should be to minimize unnecessary wear and tear; decreasing our risk of developing painful stages of osteoarthritis. Here are some thoughts on how to achieve this:

Maintain a Healthy Weight.

Every pound of unnecessary weight accelerates degeneration of the cartilage that lines all of your weight-bearing joints, from your ankles, knees, and hips, all the way up through the intervertebral joints throughout your spine.

Reduce impact during repetitive weight-bearing activities.

Use appropriate footwear and socks or insoles that provide shock absorbing cushioning. When standing or exercising, choose softer surfaces over harder ones

Avoid prolonged sitting.

Prolonged sitting, whether you are a truck driver or an office worker puts the highest stress loads on the discs in your spine. Regardless of what you do for a living, you can slow the pace at which your spine develops degenerative changes by taking regular breaks throughout the day to move around and stretch your back.

Identify and correct any muscles imbalances.

Muscle shortening and stiffness can occur when

you do the same activities over and over again without stretching or strengthening the antagonist muscles. Since muscles, tendons and ligaments attach to bones, the abnormal pull of a weak or shortened structure means that the joint is constantly under stress and can set you up for early osteoarthritis.

Early identification and treatment will prevent the need for drastic surgeries in the future.

The use of supplements for joint health is increasingly popular and includes good-quality fish oils, minerals, vitamin D3, glucosamine, chondroitin, collagen, MSM and hyaluronic acid, among others. Discuss these with your doctor if you have other health issues.

Above all a healthy diet and judicious activity are the foundation for joint health.

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"A human being is a part of the whole, called by us Universe, a part limited in time and space.

He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest - a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness.

This delusion is a kind of prison, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few people nearest to us.

Our task must be to free from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole nature in its beauty."

~ Albert Einstein

Cultivating the Habit of Being Present

How can you bring peace and calmness to the middle of a busy day? Learn to be present.

There are so many reasons that people give for not being able to quiet their minds—busy stressful jobs, housework and chores, the demands of children and relatives, etc. Ultimately it is how your mind perceives and handles the demands of your life that makes a difference. For example, if your job demands that you focus on an urgent task, you can stress out because you have a million other things to do and not enough time to do them. Or you can be present, and focus completely on that activity. Now

there is just that one activity and you. When you're done, you can move on to the next task.

Being present becomes a method that allows everything else to fade away, leaving only you and whatever you're dealing with right now. Most people don't learn to be present because they don't practice, not because it's so hard to do. Practice, practice, and being present will become natural.

Here's how to do it: whatever you're doing, right now, focus completely on doing that one thing. Pay attention to every aspect of what you're doing, to your body, to the sensations, to your thoughts.

You will notice your thoughts, if you're paying attention, jump to other things. That is natural — the idea is not to force all other thoughts from your mind. Just notice the jumping thoughts, and gently come back to the present. You will likely need to do it over and over. Don't worry about how many times you must do it. Just do it now.

Be mindful in whatever you're doing, grateful that you're able to do that task, and fully appreciate every little movement and tactile sensation of the task. You will learn that anything can be an amazing experience, even the most basic tasks.

Couch Plus Potato Equals Weight Gain

A study published recently in the *New England Journal of Medicine* concluded that weight gain over time was most strongly associated with increased consumption of potatoes, especially potato chips and French fries. Weight loss was strongly associated with increased physical activity.

The prevention of weight gain is an important issue since there are many serious medical conditions which are linked to obesity. Most weight gain occurs

gradually, at about one pound per year, making it difficult for people to identify specific causes.

This was a large study of fairly healthy people. Anyone with diabetes, obesity, cancer, cardiovascular disease, pulmonary, kidney or liver disease was not taken into the study.

The participants were monitored for lifestyle habits such as physical activity, television watching, alcohol use, sleep du-

ration and diet.

In the final analysis, those who had gained the most weight were the ones who ate the most potatoes (especially chips and French fries), sugar sweetened beverages, and meats.

Those who gained the least had diets which were high in vegetables, whole grains, fruits, nuts and yogurt.

The next time you hear: "Would you like fries with that?" Just say "No Thanks".