

The Benefits of Leading an Active Lifestyle

Staying active is vital for individuals with musculoskeletal conditions as it enhances joint flexibility, muscle strength, and mobility while alleviating pain and stiffness. Regular exercise aids in weight management, reducing joint stress and improving overall quality of life.

- **Strength Training** - Builds muscle strength, improves bone density, and enhances joint stability. Dumbbells, resistance band exercises, body-weight exercises like push-ups and squats.
- **Flexibility Exercises** - Increases range of motion, reduces stiffness, and prevents injuries. Stretching, yoga, Pilates.
- **Aerobic/Cardiovascular Exercises** - Improves cardiovascular health, aids in weight management, and boosts overall endurance. Walking, running, cycling, swimming.
- **Balance and Coordination Exercises** - Enhances stability, reduces the risk of falls, and improves coordination. Examples: Tai Chi, balance drills, standing on one leg.



Specific Exercises for Common Musculoskeletal Conditions

Osteoarthritis

- **Strengthening:** Quadriceps exercises, like leg lifts (for knee osteoarthritis).
- **Aerobic:** Low-impact activities such as swimming or cycling.
- **Flexibility:** Gentle stretching to maintain joint flexibility.

Lower Back Pain

- **Core:** Planks, bridges, and abdominal exercises for spine support.
- **Stretching:** Hamstring and cat-cow stretches for flexibility.
- **Aerobic:** Walking or swimming to improve fitness.

Shoulder Pain (e.g., rotator cuff injuries)

- **Strengthening:** Internal and external rotations for rotator cuff.
- **Stretching:** Cross-body and doorway stretches for relief.
- **Range of Motion:** Pendulum exercises for shoulder mobility.

Osteoporosis

- **Weight-Bearing:** Walking, jogging, or stair climbing to boost bone density.
- **Strength Training:** Resistance exercises to strengthen bones and muscles.
- **Balance:** Tai Chi to enhance balance and reduce fall risk.



LIVING WELL WITH MUSCULOSKELETAL CONDITIONS



This guide offers essential information and practical tips for maintaining a healthy lifestyle, covering diet improvement, activity, pain management, and mental well-being to support your journey.

**Small Changes,
Big Impact:**
Minor adjustments
in your daily
routine can greatly
enhance overall
health.



HEALTHY EATING

- **Balanced Diet:** Aim to include a variety of foods from all food groups: fruits, vegetables, proteins, dairy, and grains.
- **Reducing Inflammation:** Consuming anti-inflammatory foods like omega-3 fatty acids, fruits, and vegetables can help decrease inflammation and alleviate pain.
- **Bone Health:** Adequate intake of calcium and vitamin D strengthens bones and helps prevent conditions like osteoporosis.
- **Maintaining Muscle Mass:** Protein-rich foods aid in muscle repair and growth, supporting joints and improving mobility.
- **Portion Control:** Use practical hand measurements to gauge portion sizes. For example, a portion of protein should be about the size of your palm.
- **Hydration:** Drink plenty of water throughout the day. Aim for at least 6-8 glasses

PAIN MANAGEMENT

- **Physical Activity:** Participate in suggested exercises to enhance mobility and alleviate discomfort.
- **Medication:** Adhere to your doctor's recommendations regarding pain relief, considering over-the-counter medications such as paracetamol or ibuprofen, after seeking professional advice.
- **Relaxation Techniques:** Incorporate mindfulness, meditation, or deep-breathing exercises to cope with pain and improve overall wellness.



EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

- **Stay connected** with friends and family for emotional health.
- **Engage in self-care activities** that relax and bring joy. This could include hobbies, exercise, or spending time in nature.
- **Share your feelings** with trusted individuals for support.



It's completely natural to feel apprehensive about moving when it causes pain. However, the less we engage in physical activity, the weaker our muscles may become and the stiffer our joints can feel.

For More Information

Here are some valuable links and resources for support with musculoskeletal conditions.

