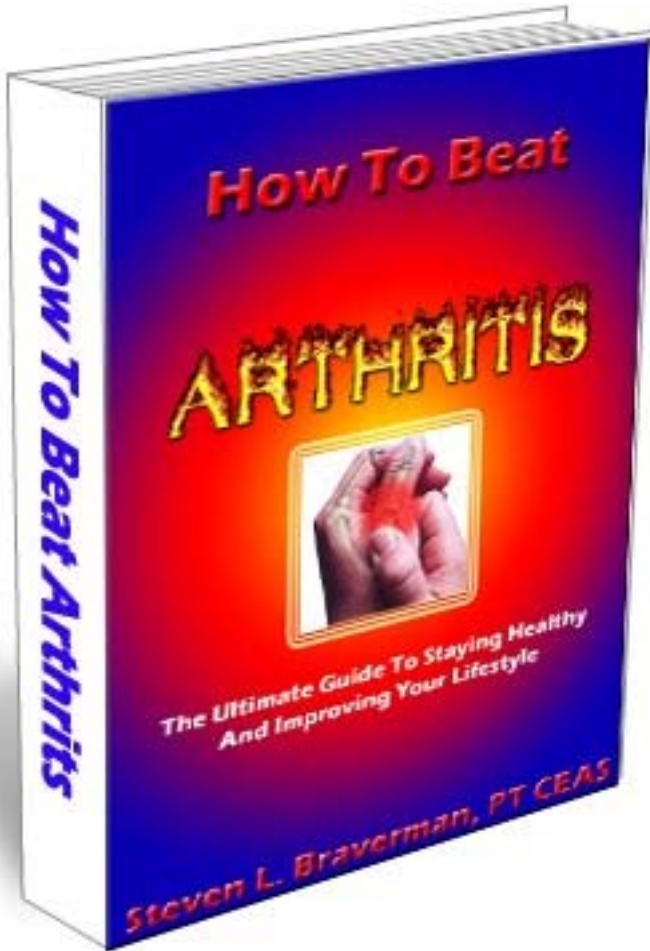


HOW TO BEAT ARTHRITIS



BY

STEVEN L. BRAVERMAN, PT CEAS

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You will be pleased to know that by downloading this e-book you are now on the exclusive list of my newsletter subscribers. This entitles you to receive a new newsletter, free of charge on a regular basis each month. Each edition will be packed with valuable tips, health plans, expert advice and informative articles to help you fight pain and lead a healthy life. You can share this excellent resource to healthy living with your acquaintances by asking them to sign up too. This e-book and newsletter is my commitment to improving your health. Thank you.

In good health,

Steven L. Braverman, PT CEAS

Disclaimer

The information in this book is not a replacement for the services of a physician, physical therapist or health care professional.

Please do not use this e-book to diagnose or treat a medical or health condition.

Please consult a physician in all matters relating to your health, and use discretion when using any of the strategies mentioned here.

Thank you and enjoy the e-book.

Steven L. Braverman, PT CEAS

President, *RESTORE Physical Therapy & Ergonomic Consultants of New York*

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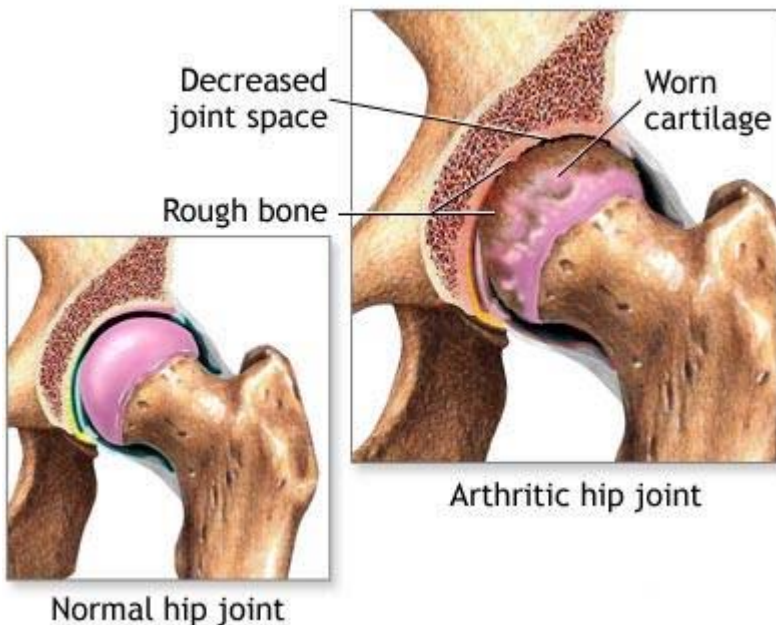
Arthritis is a growing problem in our society and state-specific projections of arthritis prevalence from 2005 through 2030 show a substantial average increase of 34% in 50 states across the United States, in addition to its prevalence in other countries.

The time to take a stand against arthritis is now!

LEARN ABOUT ARTHRITIS...
SO YOU CAN FIGHT BACK!

Arthritis is a generic term for more than 100 diseases that cause pain, stiffness and swelling. These range from inflammation of a joint to an involvement of the area around joints.

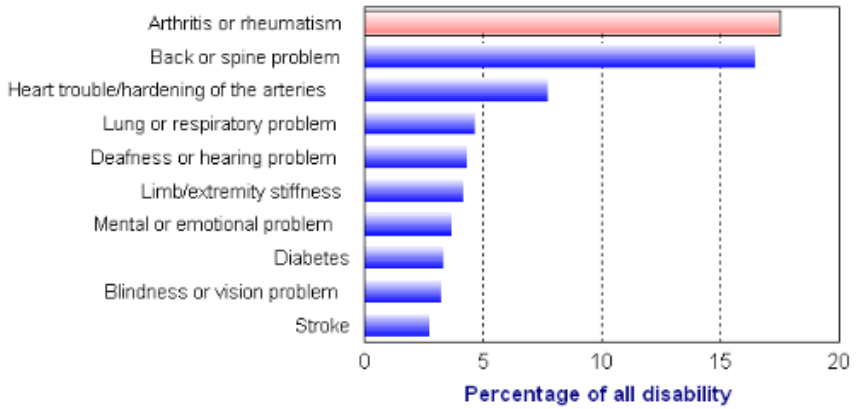
In simple terms, it involves the breakdown of cartilage within joints which causes pain, swelling and restricted movement.



ARTHRITIS FACTS

- It is the number one cause of chronic disability in the United States.
- Arthritis afflicts about 40 million men, women & children in America - about 1 out of every 7 people. This gives it the distinction of having the highest incidence rate of all disabilities and health conditions among US adults.
- As the baby boom generation approaches the year 2020, the number of afflicted Americans will grow to about 60 million.
- The disease is physical, but exacts a mental, emotional and economic toll. It is believed that Roman Emperor Diocletian exempted citizens with severe arthritis from paying taxes. This was probably due to the realization that the disease itself can be taxing enough to those that have it as well as their loved ones.

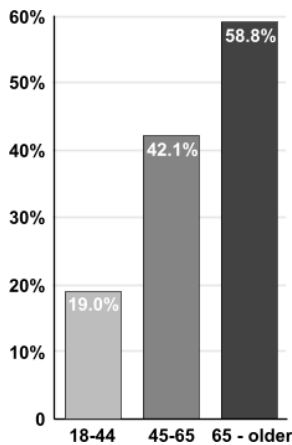
How To Beat Arthritis!



SOURCE: CDC. Prevalence of disability and associated health conditions among adults - United States, 1999. MMWR 2001; 50 (07); 120-5.

WHO IS AT RISK TO GET ARTHRITIS?

- As people grow older, there is a greater risk of developing arthritic symptoms. There is a 59% chance of developing arthritis once a person reaches the age of 65. It is also more prevalent in females than in males.
- People that are the most susceptible:
 - Are overweight
 - Have previously injured a joint
 - Put repetitive stress on an injured joint (baseball players, ballet dancers, and construction workers)



CAUSES

Since there are many different forms of arthritis, the causes are likely to vary. Scientists are currently examining how the roles of major factors including genetics and lifestyles affect the development of arthritis.

In general; a healthy joint is fully protected by cartilage. This allows for smooth movement as well as acting as a shock absorber when pressure is put on the joint, like when running. Arthritis results from the breakdown of this cartilage (for a variety of reasons). As the cartilage degenerates, the opposing bones of a joint rub together, causing pain, swelling and stiffness.

Often, the joint remains inflamed even after an injury, disease or traumatic event subsides. The resulting joint destruction, long-

term pain and deformity are referred to as **chronic arthritis**.

Did You Know?

85% of the human population will experience pain in their joints at some point in their life.

Did you know that many animals also suffer from joint pain? Dogs and horses are especially prone to joint pain.

The risk of joint pain is the cost that we incur for being blessed with a host of articulated joints that move in a manner that has allowed us to evolve into the complex and successful species we are.



SYMPTOMS

- Joint pain
- Joint swelling (can lead to joint deformity)
- Stiffness, especially first thing in the morning
- Warmth emanating from the area around a joint
- Redness of skin around the joint
- Reduced ability to move the joint, limited range of motion
- Fatigue



WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT ARTHRITIS?

- **Stop smoking!** It has been shown that the risk of developing some forms of arthritis significantly increase due to smoking.



- Maintain a healthy diet and supplement your diet if you are not getting the nutrients your body needs to maintain health. Recent research has shown the importance of vitamin C and other antioxidants in reducing the risk of Osteoarthritis and its progression.
- Early diagnosis and treatment is key! Early treatment will enable you to prevent,

minimize and quite often even reverse joint damage depending on the type/cause of your Arthritic condition.

- Find out if you have a family history of it and take the appropriate preventative action now - even if you currently have no joint pain symptoms.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO FIGHT BACK?

Joint pain can have a variety of symptoms and treatments. With the right healthcare provider, you can battle arthritic pain effectively. There are many options to reduce the effects and a few arthritic disorders can be completely cured with treatment.



Most arthritic conditions are chronic (long-term), and the goal of treatment is to control pain and minimize (sometimes reverse) further

joint damage. Chronic arthritis frequently goes in and out of remission.

Combating arthritis most often involves a multi pronged treatment approach based on your specific case that may or may not include...

EXERCISE & STRETCHING

A regular exercise and stretching routine is important to keep the body mobile and flexible. It helps to enable movement through the reduction of the related pain, maintain and increase range of motion, reduce fatigue, and it helps you look and feel better.



How Exercise Can Improve Your Lifestyle:

In regards to arthritis; a daily routine of exercises has shown to reduce joint pain and stiffness, while increasing flexibility, muscle strength, and endurance.

“Regular, moderate physical activity is beneficial in decreasing fatigue, strengthening muscles and bones, increasing flexibility and stamina, and improving an overall sense of well-being.” *Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health*

Exercise helps to:

- Keep joints supple
- Strengthen muscles around the joints
- Strengthen and maintain bone and cartilage tissue
- Improve overall ability to do everyday activities
- Improve health and fitness by:

- increasing energy level
- improving sleep
- assisting weight control
- improving overall cardiovascular condition
- decreasing depression
- improving self-esteem and emotional health

If you don't exercise when you have arthritis, you may be at risk for:

- Smaller and weaker muscles
- Brittle bones
- Pain
- Discomfort that prevents you from normal muscle activation patterns surrounding the joint.
- Loss of mobility in joints that may become locked in position if they are not routinely worked
- A feeling of malaise

Recommendations for exercises to engage in:

A balanced program that includes a combination of exercises is best. A full range of motion exercises to help maintain normal joint movement, increase flexibility, and relieve stiffness.

Do these every day:

- Strengthening exercises to maintain or increase muscle strength. Strong muscles help support and protect joints affected by arthritis. Do these at least every other day.
- Endurance exercises to improve cardiovascular fitness, help control weight, and improve overall well-being. Do these for 20 to 30 minutes three times a week. Swimming or water aerobics in a heated pool give you the benefits of exercise, and working out in water relieves the weight on sore joints.
- Taking walks - You don't have to go to a gym or work up a sweat to get a good exercise for your joints. Walking is a great exercise and just about anyone can do it. Research shows those who take brief daily walks have less morning stiffness and pain than those who do not exercise.
- Biking - Short bike rides give you a good workout while taking the weight off your

joints. You can also buy a stationary exercise bike to use at home.

- Lifting weights- Try exercising with light weights to increase upper-body strength. Remember - the more you weigh, the greater the stress on your joints, especially your hips, knees, and ankles. If you are overweight, losing even five to ten pounds can help reduce your pain.

Important exercising guidelines:

Before you begin an arthritis exercise program, you should consult a physician or a physical therapist, especially if you have not exercised in a while, have had any surgical procedures, or are over 40 years old.

- Always start very gently so you can find out how much you are able to do without making the pain worse.
- 'Little and often' is better than long, infrequent burst of activity!

- Gradually increase your exercise in small amounts but regularly.. If you take it too easy, you will not get the optimal benefits..
- Do not worry that the arthritis might worsen. As long as you start with gentle exercises, you will not.
- Be adventurous; find a form of exercise, which is fun. However, hang-gliding is probably not a good idea, though it may seem like a lot of fun!
- The key is to exercise moderately and properly, and allow your body to rest between workouts. Rest is critical to restoring and repairing joints and reducing inflammation.

Medication

Many drugs, both prescriptions and over-the-counter medications, are used to treat arthritis. Common medications are aspirin-free pain relievers, anti-inflammatory drugs, corticosteroids, disease modifiers, and sleep medications. Injection therapy, also known as

“visco supplementation” with drugs such as Synvisc, Orthovisc and Euflexa replace the hyaluronic acid in the fluid that surrounds the joint that is lost with advanced osteoarthritis.

Natural Supplementation

With age, body loses some of its natural ability to produce the nutrients required to maintain healthy joints. Natural supplements offer many short and long-term benefits that have proved as an invaluable addition to a joint health plan.

DIET

Substantial research has been done to find out the link between diet and arthritis. From the research evidence so far, we recommend that you should:



- Pay close attention to portion size at every meal and only eat when hungry
- Drink plenty of water and avoid beverages that are high in caffeine and/or sugar

- Eat less sugar and fat, especially saturated fat, and try to use olive oil in your diet
- Eat more fruit and vegetables, especially brightly colored varieties
- Eat plenty of calcium and iron rich foods
- Try replacing meat with oily fish twice per week (unless you have gout)
- If you have inflammatory arthritis, which is not gout, consider increasing the intake of oily fish and/or fish oil supplements.

Generally, if you have concerns that you are not getting a well balanced diet with 100% of the nutrients needed to fight arthritis – it is a good idea to add a quality multi-vitamin supplement. Research has confirmed that liquid vitamins are superior in the delivery of their nutritional content.

Phosphorus: Drugs prescribed for arthritis – primarily NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-

inflammatory drugs) – can have very negative effects such leeching nutrients from the body. Additionally, the use of antacids can result in flushing out phosphorus - a key mineral to keeping bones strong and healthy - from your body.

Calcium: Calcium is an important basic nutrient. Not having enough calcium in the diet can make you more likely to get osteoporosis (brittle bones). Women after the menopause are particularly liable to osteoporosis. Many people with arthritis also have a risk of developing this condition. The richest sources of calcium are milk, cheese and yogurt and, as shown below, certain types of fish which are eaten with the bones. If you are watching your weight, it is worth knowing that skimmed or semi-skimmed milk actually contains more calcium than full-fat milk. We recommend a daily intake of calcium of

1000 milligrams (mg) or 1500 mg if you are over 60. A pint of milk a day, together with a reasonable amount of other foods, which contain calcium, should be sufficient.

Vitamin D: Vitamin D is needed for the body to absorb calcium and there is some evidence that arthritis (both osteoarthritis and inflammatory types), progresses faster in bodies with a deficiency of Vitamin D. Vitamin D is produced by the body when sunlight falls on the skin, so slight deficiency is quite common in winter, and it can be obtained from the diet (especially from oily fish) or vitamin supplements. For individuals over the age of 60, it may be helpful to take a supplement, containing 10–20 micrograms (μg) of vitamin D.

If you do not consume many dairy products, soya milk is now available in most supermarkets. It can be used in exactly the same

way as cow's milk. Some soya milk is fortified with calcium, so it should be preferred over others.. Other 'milks', made from rice or oats, are also available; some of these are also fortified with calcium. If you are not drinking dairy products or a suitable quantity of other calcium-fortified 'milk' or other calcium-fortified products, you may need a calcium supplement.



Iron: Iron is important to prevent anemia. Many people with arthritis are anemic. The anemia can be due to different causes. NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) such as

aspirin and ibuprofen help the pain and stiffness of arthritis but may cause bleeding and stomach ulcers in some people, leading to anemia. The other main cause of anemia in arthritis is anemia of chronic disease, which often occurs with rheumatoid arthritis and similar conditions, and does not improve with iron supplements. If you are anemic, your doctor can tell you if more iron is likely to help.

The best source of iron in food is red meat. However, it is important to consume iron from various sources. Iron from fish is easily absorbed and oily fish are a good source. For example, sardines contain as much iron as beef. Iron is better absorbed if there is also vitamin C in the meal so have a good portion of vegetables or salad or fresh fruit with your meal. On the other hand, tea reduces the amount of iron which your body can absorb so it is a good idea not to drink

tea with your meal. If you are vegan, please note that dairy products like milk and cheese are a very poor source of iron, but vegetables like haricot beans and lentils and dark green vegetables (such as kale, spinach and watercress) are quite good sources. Good sources of iron like these should be included daily in a vegetarian diet.

Apply Heat Or Cold

Use of hot or cold therapy over joints may provide short-term relief from pain and stiffness.

Rest

Rest is a very important and integral component of any joint pain management plan. Getting from 8 to 10 hours of sleep per night and taking naps during the day will give your joints time to recover from damage and may even help reduce the number of flare-up recurrences.



Pacing Activities

Pacing helps protect your joints by alternating periods of activity with periods of rest so that your joints do not tire from the stress of repeated tasks.

Get A Massage

Massage treatments have been proven to increase circulation and decrease tension throughout the body. Aside from feeling great, the beneficial effects of a massage will help you relax, improve your mental fitness and

experience temporary relief in pain. There are certified massage therapist that specialize in arthritic pain relief and can visit you on a regular basis.

Maintain Good Posture

When standing, keep your legs shoulder width for balance and optimum support. Keep your shoulders back to reduce stress in your lower back. When seated, make use of a small pillow to support your lower back and keep your knees and hips at a 90 degree angle whenever possible.

Move

Avoid sitting for long periods. If you must remain in one position for more than 30 minutes at a time, shift your weight around and stretch to keep your joints from becoming stiff and sore.

Proactive Joint Protection

Protect your joints by learning to use them in ways that:

- Load weight to your larger healthy joints before loading to your smaller more vulnerable joints
- Avoid using your damaged, sore and/or weak joints as much as possible.



In practice this means you should lift with your legs before you use your back, lift at your shoulders before you lift at your elbows, push with you elbows before pushing with your wrists, etc.

Another way to protect your joints is to use load bearing, assistive devices such as a cane or a brace.

Finally, maintaining a healthy weight will relieve joint pain as it will put lesser stress on them.

A positive attitude plays an important role in fighting arthritis and improving the quality of life.

Arthritis is a subject of constant research and doctors have made significant progress, therefore it is important that you keep abreast with the new methods that are discovered to treat arthritis or fighting pain.

About The Author

Steven L. Braverman, PT CEAS is a licensed physical therapist practicing in New York City. Mr. Braverman graduated from the physical therapy program at the State University of New York at Stony Brook in 1986.

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