



# Hip Osteoarthritis and Exercise

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Osteoarthritis (OA) is a common diagnosis which is more prevalent in the aging individual. Arthritis is generally diagnosed with radiography which will typically show a decreased joint space (narrowing), bone spur formation (osteophytes), and cartilage damage.<sup>1</sup> Hip OA can be debilitating for patients and can often lead to pharmacological interventions such as NSAIDS, cortisone shots, and even opioids in severe cases, as well as total hip replacements when conservative measures have failed. Evidence is pointing to exercise, weight loss and educating patients (such as developing a home exercise program) as the first line of defense for battling hip arthritis.

Often times patients will present with stiffness (especially after long-duration sitting or first thing in the morning), loss of range of motion (ROM) of the hip, and painful ROM. Exercise can address these impairments and many beneficial exercises can be performed effectively at home. In a recent systematic review, researchers (Frandsen et al)<sup>2</sup> evaluated the effect of land-based exercise programs to address pain, physical function and quality of life in adults with hip OA. The results showed a greater improvement in physical function and pain levels in the exercise groups than the control groups. Frequency and duration of exercise varied depending on the study (from 1x per week to 3x per week; 6-12 weeks; 30-60 min sessions).<sup>1</sup>

Before jumping into an exercise routine, it is important to not only receive clearance from your physician but also be sure the exercise routine is specific for your case, especially in the presence of comorbidities (diabetes, heart issues, back pain, etc). A physical therapist can evaluate your current status and function and prescribe safe exercises to perform to address arthritic issues. It is also beneficial to follow-up with your therapist to be sure you are adhering to the program and performing all exercises properly. Another option for care is pursuing aquatic therapy (we offer this at many of our other clinic branches) which provides lower stress to the joints while still providing the ability to advance ROM, strength, endurance and improve function.

1. Poquet N, Williams M, Bennell KL. Exercise for osteoarthritis of the hip. *Phys Ther.* 2016; 96 (11):1689-1694.

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2. Fransen M, McConnell S, Hernandez-Monila G, Reichenbach S. Exercise for osteoarthritis of the hip. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev.* 2014;4:CD007912.