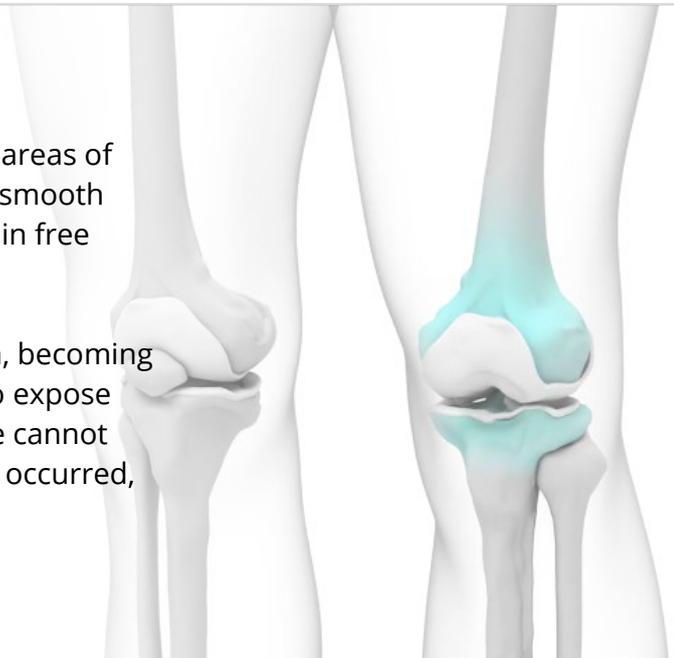


OA Knee

Osteoarthritis, or OA, is the most common cause of physical disability in older adults. It can also be described as wear and tear, or called degenerative joint disease. The knee is one of the most common joints affected by the condition.

A joint is where two bones meet. These contacting areas of bone are covered with a tissue called cartilage. It's smooth design with no nerve supply, allows low friction, pain free movement of the joint,

OA occurs when this cartilage starts to break down, becoming stiff and painful. It can wear significantly enough to expose the roughened surfaces of bone beneath. Cartilage cannot be regenerated by the body, so once this wear has occurred, there is no way to reverse it.



There are various reasons why you might develop osteoarthritis. By definition, degenerative conditions get worse with time. Women are a little more likely to develop OA, as are those that have lead a particularly high impact lifestyle.

Obesity plays a large role in increasing your chances of developing OA. The greater the load on the joints, the more stresses are placed on the tissues. Previous joint injury or structural abnormalities also increase your likelihood of developing OA.



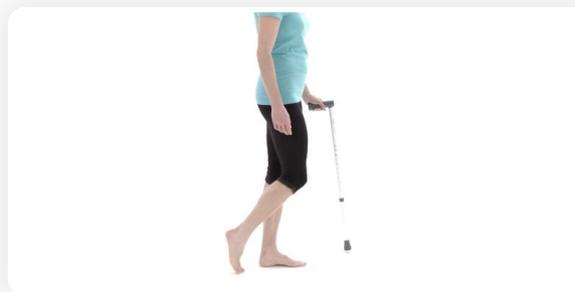
With some simple management, it is possible to significantly slow the degenerative process of your knee.

Exercise is key. The worst thing you could do by your knee is to stop using it. Focus on low impact exercise such as cycling, or swimming. But avoid breaststroke as the twisting action of the legs can aggravate your knee.

Address the activities that particularly provoke your symptoms. It may be necessary to temporarily cut back.

Manage your pain with pain killers. This will enable you to perform the necessary exercises to maintain the stability and movement of the joint. Degeneration causes stiffness, so ensure you continue to move your knee through it's entire range of movement.

The weaker the muscles, the more excess stresses and strains are placed on the cartilage. Keeping your buttock, thigh and calf muscles flexible and strong will help you to protect your knee.



As the joint wears, your ability to balance on it is reduced. Perform drills that help you to control your knee, and reduce your risk of falling.

Finally, do not be afraid to use a walking aid. Degenerative conditions have good days and bad days. Using a walking stick or elbow crutches can help you to continue to function on these bad days, and prevent you from further provoking your pain.