



ARTHRITIS AND YOU

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ARTHRITIS AND YOU

In the US, the month of May has been established as National Arthritis Awareness Month to help bring more public understanding about a condition that affects 50 million people in the United States. This would equate to affecting the quality of life of 1 in 5 adults.

Arthritis is a broad term for various joint problems in the body and can be broadly divided into osteoarthritis which is the most common form and rheumatoid arthritis which is much less common but very debilitating. Approximately 1.5 million people suffer with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) in the US with it being 2-3 times more common in women over men. RA is a type of arthritis characterized by bouts of inflammation and pain which is generated by an auto-immune response in the body.

This is where one's own immune system is reacting against the body's own tissues to create inflammation, pain and eventual degenerative joint changes. The causes are not known but have a relationship to hormonal and stress influences, and its effects are most pronounced on peripheral joints like our feet and hands. Medication, light exercises such as in a pool and modifying one's lifestyle are simple interventions. It can be a very painful, destructive and difficult disorder to manage overtime and often requires strong prescription medication to reduce the immune response against one's own tissues.

In contrast, osteoarthritis is the result of mechanical stress from gravity, compression, compensation and/or trauma. Osteoarthritis (OA) is the more common form. Osteo means bone, arth relates joint and itis for inflammation. It literally means inflammation of a joint.

(Continued Inside)

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ARTHRITIS AND YOU

(Continued From Outside)

There are several diagnostic terms used to describe this condition and so this can lead to some confusion about what is your particular issue.

Arthritis means inflammation of the joint where there is warmth, swelling, pain and limited movement. This could happen as a result of a fall, sports injury, or accident where there is trauma. Prior to the event, the joint was not inflamed and functioning well. Due to the event, if no significant damage was done where surgery might be needed the common treatment is meds, rest, ice, and compression and elevation (RICE) along with physical therapy depending on severity. This technically would be called arthritis but most doctors would diagnose this as a joint strain/sprain of one degree or another.

The far more common terminology for osteoarthritis, which actually starts showing up more and more after 50 years of age, is called degenerative osteoarthritis or joint disease (DJD). This relates to joint changes as a result of mechanical stress to the joint, either as the long-term consequence of prior trauma (old sports injury) or joint changes which slowly accrue over time. It is often diagnosed on x-ray and is a condition that is qualified by severity (mild, moderate to severe) based on how the x-ray looks.

Osteoarthritis can affect any joint but some joints or zones in our body are more vulnerable. This is evidenced by the frequency of surgery to correct a problem or replace a joint such as in the knees or hips. Total knee replacement (TKA) are up to 700,000/yr. and total hip replacement (THA) 400,000/yr. in the US. These stats are climbing in numbers and occurring earlier in age as a pattern of change over the past ten years.

The crucial criteria for joint replacement or surgery in general is whether the possible candidate is in such pain and limited movement that the replacement or surgery will significantly improve the patient's quality of life. When this occurs, the patient will be quite impressed with the procedure. Otherwise, if they act too soon thinking I am going in like I would for my car mechanic to replace my alternator or brakes, one can be less impressed. As well, with TKAs and shoulder replacement, there is some significant physical therapy done after the procedure to regain motion and function as well as reduce pain. So, these procedures are no walk in the park to be able to eventually walk in the park and so should be entered into with a full understanding of the risks, benefits and post-surgical rehab demands.

As mentioned earlier, osteoarthritis (OA) is given as a gradient diagnosis from mild to severe. How one ends up with severe OA is either from some severe trauma from some time in the past setting up accelerated joint breakdown. Or, windows of opportunity were missed along the way from the progressive stages of mild to moderate to prevent the joint changes from advancing.

With the above understanding about arthritis, one might wonder what is done to help someone manage with the early stages of OA? Often, when conferring with your doctor because of persistent joint pain, there will be an exam including x-rays to determine how the joint is moving and what it looks like on the inside. Many times, based on even just x-rays and age alone, a diagnosis of arthritis will be provided. The recommendation could be to reduce activity, take medications like Advil or Ibuprofen and see if it improves.

Unfortunately, when a patient walks away from their doctor's appointment they often feel there is very little that can be done for them outside of medication or giving up the activities they love. One can feel some sense of loss as well as feeling lost in what else can be done to help this problem. What is key to understanding arthritis and pain is that the joint is one of several important structures that can be painful.

" My condition has improved 90% since coming to PT. I have better mobility, ... energy, ... I have my life back!" - Eric L.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

This year, we had 3 of our Full Potential team members celebrate St. Patrick's Day by braving the chill to participate in the Holland Running Club's Leprechaun Chase 5K through downtown Holland, Windmill Island, and Hope College's campus.



On March 12, even though it was only 12 degrees (with a wind chill that brought it down to 2 degrees- burrr!), Jeremy, Jodi, and Meg all beat the freezing weather and placed in the top 3rd of their respective age groups! Jeremy placed 1st in his age group and 6th overall with a time of 20:16 (and in shorts no less!). Jodi was 1st in her age group, 2nd female overall, and 14th runner overall with a time of 21:37. Meg believes the luck of the Irish helped her run faster and place 3rd in her age group with a time of 26:07.

Proceeds from the race were donated to the Lakeshore Chapter of My Team Triumph, a nonprofit that provides road racing experiences for people with disabilities, helping them to purchase or maintain the "chariots" used during races.

Congratulations to Jeremy, Jodi, and Meg! We're proud of your holiday spirit!

(Pictured from L to R- Jeremy Decker, Sara Decker (Jeremy's wife), Jodi Rupp, and Meg Ready)

We Want to Hear From You!

We love providing educational content for our Patients each month! Scan the QR code with your phone's camera to fill out our survey! This will allow us to provide the most relevant content, that YOU want to read about each month!



Has your pain come back? We can help! Call us at 616-537-2864 to book your appointment today!

ARTHRITIS AND YOU

To say, 100% of your pain is coming from only the joint is not always true. Ligaments, tendons and muscles are also part of the joint complex and will influence how pain is experienced in the joint.

As well, many times a painful joint can be attempting to compensate for a different area of the body that is not fully doing his share of the work. There could be weakness or limited motion that is forcing a knee or hip to work beyond their designed limits and the consequence is pain and premature joint wear. If the weak and tight areas are identified and corrected along with calming the inflamed painful joint, great things can happen.

In addition, it should be recognized that one of the underappreciated qualities in our joint systems is space. Joint space is what you, in youth, had and life with gravity and compression promote lost space over time. Physical therapy can have an amazing impact on restoring space when OA is in the mild to moderate stages of changes. I have witnessed this so many times over 35 years of PT; it is an area of care that has so much potential. However, people need to reach in the right direction to treat the cause of the pain and not only the painful joint. Pain meds, Advil, and Ibuprofen do not always treat the reason for the inflammation/pain and overutilization of them is not only hard on your organs but holds potential for accelerating cartilage breakdown of the very joint you're trying to heal.

At Full Potential, we examine your painful joint and all related joints to see how they are working as a team. When you walk, run, climb stairs, or ride a bike is only the painful joint moving? No, of course not, so that painful joint should be evaluated as part of a system of movement. An x-ray is part of the data needed; the PT obtains the remainder by a thorough exam to provide a full picture of the forces causing your joint to hurt.

Take action, save your joint cartilage and protect your joint space by motivating to get the help you need early in the pain problem to avoid more complicated problems in the future. Pain is a signal something is wrong; medication can sometimes hide the more important reason to be discovered for the pain. There is a reason the US does so many TKAs a year (over 700,000) and it has a lot to do with the above last four paragraphs. May is arthritis awareness month, Full Potential PT is here to help you understand your options and help you stay active.

The showcased success story of Erik L, matched much of what has been discussed above. We restored space, mobility, strength and understanding to help him. He is now empowered to help himself. This could be you too, get a referral and make things happen if you are dealing with joint pain.

To Being Your Best,

Vincent Hauueken, PT/Owner

<https://www.campbellclinic.com/total-joint-replacement-procedures>
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PLAY THE REFERRAL GAME

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Your Name

Our New Patient's Name!

Date Of Referral

At Full Potential, we know that a referral from our patients is the biggest compliment.

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FIGHT DEPRESSION WITH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Everyone knows that regular exercise is good for the body. But exercise is also one of the most effective ways to improve your mental health. Regular exercise can have a profoundly positive impact on depression, anxiety, ADHD, and more. It also relieves stress, improves memory, helps you sleep better, and boosts overall mood. And you don't have to be a fitness fanatic to reap the benefits. Research indicates that modest amounts of exercise can make a difference. No matter your age or fitness level, you can learn to use exercise as a powerful tool to feel better.

Exercise and depression. Maintaining an exercise schedule can prevent you from relapsing. It promotes all kinds of changes in the brain, including neural growth, reduced inflammation, and new activity patterns that promote feelings of calm and well-being. It also releases endorphins, powerful chemicals in your brain that energize your spirits and make you feel good. Exercise can also serve as a distraction, allowing you to find some quiet time to break out of the cycle of negative thoughts that feed depression.

Exercise and anxiety. Anything that gets you moving can help, but you'll get a bigger benefit if you pay attention instead of zoning out. By adding this mindfulness element—really focusing on your body and how it feels as you exercise—you'll not only improve your physical condition faster, but you may also be able to interrupt the flow of constant worries running through your head.

Exercise and ADHD. Exercising regularly is one of the easiest and most effective ways to reduce the symptoms of ADHD and improve concentration, motivation, memory, and mood. Physical activity immediately boosts the brain's dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin levels—all of which affect focus and attention.

Exercise and PTSD and trauma. Evidence suggests that by really focusing on your body and how it feels as you exercise, you can actually help your nervous system become "unstuck" and begin to move out of the immobilization stress response that characterizes PTSD or trauma. Instead of thinking about other things, pay close attention to the physical sensations in your joints and muscles, even your insides as your body moves.

Exercises that involve cross movement and that engage both arms and legs—such as walking (especially in sand), running, swimming, weight training, or dancing—are some of your best choices.

Outdoor activities like hiking, sailing, mountain biking, rock climbing, whitewater rafting, and skiing (downhill and cross-country) have also been shown to reduce the symptoms of PTSD.

As you can see, simple exercise is a common denominator to helping with many mental health disorders, if your body is not able to go out and do a 1-2 mile walk without pain interrupting your ability to do this consistently and receive the benefits, then consider getting a referral from your doctor and let us help you resolve the physical problem so you can take advantage of this powerful form of help that can assist you in managing a difficult condition.

PATIENT *Success* STORY



FROM NO MOBILITY TO ALMOST FULL USE!

From no mobility to almost full use of my Achilles.

Everyone at Full Potential is incredibly nice, friendly and helpful. I could tell that their goals aligned with mine and each session was based on my progress not a predetermined schedule.

Tom S.



Nagging pain that won't go away? Call us at 616-537-2864 to book your appointment today!