



Physiotherapists:  
The Body Specialists

# Physio Tips

ARTHRITIS

Physiotherapy Association of BC

## ARTHRITIS PAIN? YOUR PHYSIOTHERAPIST WILL HELP

Consult a Physiotherapist if you are experiencing pain, joint stiffness and decreased mobility due to arthritis. Physiotherapy has an excellent long-standing history of effectively treating the symptoms of arthritis.

A Canadian study of patients with **Rheumatoid Arthritis** showed that those who followed a home-based physiotherapy program improved with the treatment and were able to maintain the results one year later. Other research findings have shown that low-intensity exercise over a 24-week period can provide pain relief and improvement in functional status.

There is strong evidence that therapeutic exercise is an effective means to achieve pain relief, improve strength, reduce swollen joints and improve function which means less sick leave and a better quality of life.

Therapeutic exercise plays an important role in managing the symptoms of other forms of arthritis as well, such as **Osteoarthritis**.

Therapeutic exercise, whether prescribed for specific joint problems or a general exercise program, results in reduced pain, improvement in physical activity, aerobic capacity and energy levels.

Carrying excess weight puts individuals at risk of developing osteoarthritis, particularly in the weight-bearing hip and knee joints. A recent report from the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) demonstrates a correlation between being obese and the incidence of knee and hip replacement surgeries.

Physiotherapy begins with a medical history and physical assessment that includes an analysis of function and gait. The treatment is then tailored to the individual's symptoms, needs and lifestyle.

Using exercise, education and a variety of therapeutic modalities as needed, physiotherapists work with their clients to help them:

- Regain muscle balance and flexibility
- Improve circulation and endurance
- Improve strength and stability
- Improve poor posture; and
- Maintain or increase mobility

Physiotherapists make a contribution across the health care continuum. They help people of all ages gain and maintain optimal physical function and an active lifestyle. With their applied knowledge and understanding of the human body in action, physiotherapists are able to help their patients increase mobility, have less pain, build strength and improve balance and cardiovascular function.

Physiotherapists not only treat injuries, they also provide education on how to prevent the onset of pain and/or injury that can limit activity. For more information, visit the Arthritis Society's web site at [www.arthritis.ca](http://www.arthritis.ca).

Physiotherapists are experts in movement and mobility, body mechanics, muscles and joints. They will help develop an exercise program specially-tailored to your needs, putting together the right combination of activities to improve physical fitness and avoid injury.



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