

# Osteoarthritis of the Knee

## Information for Patients



**This leaflet has been written to give you the right information about knee osteoarthritis and what you can do to help with your recovery.**

### What is osteoarthritis?

Osteoarthritis is a condition that affects your joints and it is commonly misunderstood. Osteoarthritis describes the adaptive and useful changes in the way your joint looks and works in order for it to cope with the fact that it is getting older. It is not damage and is not dangerous for you or your joints.

### What are the common symptoms?

**Pain:** Osteoarthritis can cause pain but equally so, sometimes doesn't cause any pain at all. In most cases where the knee is sore, the discomfort will stay around the knee, but sometimes it can travel into your shin or up your thigh.

**Stiffness:** Stiffness or limited movement is a common symptom with osteoarthritis of the knee. Stiffness is often worse after rest such as first thing in the morning but eases over time.

**Noises:** Clicks, pops, clunks and grinds are very normal in all joints, including your knee, and in most cases are nothing to worry about.

**Difficulty walking:** In a lot of cases, an osteoarthritic knee will be most uncomfortable when you put weight on it and if walking, you may find that your knee will get tired more quickly.

### What can I do to help myself?

**Calm it down:** Often the best place to start with any painful complaint is to try and calm it down. In a lot of cases there will be things your knee likes to do and some things that it is less happy to do. Calming it down simply means looking at the things it doesn't like and trying to make some adjustments or changes to make it easier for yourself. For example, walking for a long time or going up/downstairs may be uncomfortable therefore, taking more breaks whilst on your feet or taking one step at a time how often you cross your legs may be useful whilst your knee is unhappy.

**Keep it moving:** Try to move your knee as far as you can comfortably as often as you can. It may feel that moving a sore knee is one of the last things you want to do but it is something that can really help ease the problem over time.

**Build it back up again:** Movement is medicine for your body and your knee is no different. Calming the issue down (as described above) is often the best place to start and sometimes this might take a few weeks to help. Once your knee feels a little calmer, it is a good idea to start to 'build it back up again'. What this means is that once the knee is able to tolerate some gentle strengthening exercise, then it is worth starting some.

### Will it get better?

For most people, knee pain will not be a pleasant experience but reassuringly, it does have the potential to be better. By understanding the issue as best you can and by adjusting what is sore to then allow you to explore some exercise/s, is often the best formula for success.

If you would like to know more about knee pain or find a greater choice of exercises, you can explore our dedicated webpage.

**Search online:** [Norfolk and Waveney MSK services](#) 'knee osteoarthritis'

## Exercises



Place a chair behind you. Slowly lower your bottom down to the chair, briefly touch your bottom to the chair (do not sit down) and rise up.

Aim to work until your legs tire. Complete little and often throughout the day.



Lean backwards against the wall or solid surface. Take your feet a good distance away from the wall. Keeping your back against the wall, slowly slide down the wall as far as is comfortable (you do not have to go as low as shown in the picture).

Aim to work until your legs tire. Complete little and often throughout the day.



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