

Arthritis is a general term to refer to joint pain or joint disease. Some arthritis is preventable through lifestyle choices, exercise, and diet management.

Over [100 types](#) of arthritis affect more than 50 million adults and 300,000 children in the United States. Most types are [more common](#) [✓] in females, including osteoarthritis, [rheumatoid arthritis](#), and [fibromyalgia](#). Gout is more common in males.

Research has found that genes make some people [more likely](#) [✓] to develop arthritis. However, a person can make routine changes that can prevent or slow the progression of this disease.

In this article, we examine ways to keep arthritis at bay for as long as possible.

Diet

According to a Swedish [study](#), a diet rich in [omega-3 fatty acids](#) can help prevent the development of rheumatoid arthritis among women. A [variety of foods](#) [✓] contain omega-3s, including:

- fish, especially cold water fish, such as salmon, tuna, and sardines
- nuts and seeds, including flaxseed, chia, and walnuts
- plant oils, such as flaxseed, soybean, and canola
- fortified foods, including yogurt, eggs, and milk
- supplements

Other foods that may help [fight arthritis](#) include:

- cherries, for their anti-inflammatory properties
- low fat dairy, to improve bone density and strength
- broccoli, to build bones and slow the development of [osteoarthritis](#)
- green tea, for antioxidants that protect cartilage
- citrus, which contains vitamin C that helps prevent inflammatory arthritis
- garlic, to prevent [cartilage damage](#)

Exercise

Physical activity is one of the best ways to prevent arthritis. The Arthritis Foundation recommends [30 minutes](#) of moderate-intensity exercise five times a week to keep joints flexible and help strengthen the muscles that support them.

Exercise can involve walking, doing chores around the house, or playing with children and pets. However, a person will see the biggest result from working out consistently. They should set the difficulty level of the exercise according to their age and fitness level.

Injuries to the joints are a [common way](#) for osteoarthritis to develop. Exercise helps strengthen the muscles that provide balance and stability. Moderate-intensity exercise, done correctly, helps protect the body against injury.

Weight management

A few extra pounds may seem easy to overlook, but every pound added puts [four extra pounds](#) of stress on the knees and increases strain on the hips. That pressure causes the breakdown of cartilage that helps cushion the joints.

Fat cells also produce proteins called [cytokines](#) that cause [inflammation](#) in the body. Cytokines are responsible for the increased breakdown of cartilage in the joints. As a person's weight increases, the production of cytokines increases too, which speeds up the destruction of irreplaceable cartilage.

Blood sugar

[More than half](#) of people with [diabetes](#) in the U.S. also have arthritis. This is because high blood sugar stiffens cartilage, making it more susceptible to damage from joint use.

Diabetes also causes inflammation throughout the body, which can cause cartilage deterioration.

Quit smoking

Rectangular Snip

People who smoke have [an increased risk](#) of rheumatoid arthritis.

Smoking can also cause breathing and circulatory problems, which can make it difficult to stay active. This can prevent movement, such as exercise, which helps maintain joint flexibility and strengthens muscles that support joints.

Medical consultation

If a person begins to feel pain in a joint, and it does not subside within a few days, they should visit a doctor for a consultation. Arthritis is a progressive condition, so the more time that passes before treatment begins, the more damage can occur to the joint.

Doctors may recommend medication to help relieve pain and slow the progression of arthritis. In some cases, they may recommend surgery to relieve pain or repair joints that are badly damaged.

Summary

Arthritis is a generic term for joint pain or joint disease. There are many types of arthritis and a person can take steps to prevent it. However, genetics also play a factor in whether individuals will develop the condition.

Diet, exercise, and smoking are major factors in preventing arthritis. A person can try to follow a low fat, anti-inflammatory diet that is rich in omega-3 fatty acids. They should make sure to keep joints moving with daily exercise and maintain a moderate weight. Avoiding smoking or working to quit is also an important way to reduce the likelihood of developing arthritis.

If pain occurs in a joint, a person should seek medical advice. Starting a treatment plan early on may prevent or slow joint damage.