

## **Making a Move to Keep Arthritis in Check**

OSF HealthCare Newsroom

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It's a phrase you probably have heard said, especially by older people – their arthritis is acting up - as a way to explain pain and stiffness in their joints.

Arthritis is a generalized term to describe the thinning of the cartilage, the protective coating at the end of the bone where it meets the joint. As the cartilage becomes thinner, nerve endings underneath that layer start getting aggravated and painful.

But it's not just a condition for the senior set. According to the Arthritis Foundation, an estimated 54 million adults have been diagnosed with arthritis, with the most common type – osteoarthritis – affecting about 31 million Americans. Almost 300,000 babies and children have arthritis.

The most common form of the disease is osteoarthritis, but some individuals suffer from inflammatory arthritis, known as rheumatoid arthritis. Other forms can actually be destructive to the joints.

Arthritis is hereditary, so when it comes to prevention, sometimes it's about lessening the severity of the condition.

### **SOT Dr. Joseph Newcomer, Orthopedic Surgeon**

(Some of the best things you can do is to maintain a good body habitus, try to keep the weight off, try to maintain a good weight for your frame. Maintaining joint mobility making sure that the muscles that cross the joint are in good condition. And when you do start having problems, seek attention. Don't try to tough it out because often times people get this misconception that if they just try to fight through it like they did when they were 19 and they felt sore it can actually make things a little bit worse. :33)

Dr. Joseph Newcomer is an orthopedic surgeon. He says he is offering surgical options to younger people when they have exhausted non-surgical options, of which there are several, including Tylenol or anti-inflammatory drugs like Aleve or Advil.

Sometimes a simple lifestyle change can help as well.

### **SOT Dr. Joseph Newcomer, Orthopedic Surgeon**

(If somebody has an option of taking the stairs thinking they're going to be healthy and use them versus an escalator I recommend you use the escalator try to unload the joint a little bit. Assistive devices nobody wants to talk about using a cane especially if you're in your 40s or 50s but unloading weight is quite effective. We do have injections that are available, everybody hears about steroid or cortical steroid, Cortizone is probably the most common injection we use, but it's temporary, it does nothing for the arthritis except reduce some of the swelling and it will make people feel good for a short period of time. :38)

Dr. Newcomer says it's important to move and be active for a variety of health reasons, but it's a matter of doing the right type of exercise, and listening to your body, to take care of your joints in the long run. If you are feeling pain and stiffness, he encourages you to talk to your doctor sooner rather than later to find what's best for you.