

Moving Can Help Your Joint and Muscle Pain

When you have joint or muscle pain, you may think the best thing you can do is rest. But, in fact, prolonged rest can stiffen and weaken muscles, and it can make pain worse.

Moving may not be comfortable now, but it is a way to help yourself feel better and speed your recovery. Even everyday activities, like light household chores or short walks, can make a positive difference in your pain.

There are other benefits to being active, too.

An active life may reduce your risk of certain health conditions, such as:

- Obesity
- Heart disease
- Depression
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Osteoporosis
- High cholesterol
- Breast and colon cancer

One key to moving when you are in pain is to scale your activities down to what you feel able to do. Try to find ways to be active that will not aggravate your pain. Check with your health care provider for ideas. And remember that it's normal to feel some discomfort when you move. Discomfort doesn't mean you've done harm to yourself.

However, if you feel sharp or sudden pain, stop what you're doing. If the pain gets worse after you've rested for a bit, contact your health care provider.

Dealing with muscle or joint pain can be frustrating. But don't let it keep you from working toward your goals. Think about the activities you would like to do once your pain is better. Work toward those goals in small, manageable steps. No amount of effort is too small. Modify activities as needed so that you can do them more easily.

Just keep moving!

Being active can also help you:

- Sleep better
- Have more energy
- Think more clearly
- Improve your mood and sense of well-being
- Have better quality of life

