



THREE SIMPLE STEPS TO ARTHRITIS PAIN RELIEF

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If you suffer from arthritis, you are not alone.

Usually, the first thing most individuals try is nonprescription medications (like Aspirin, Tylenol, Advil, or Aleve) for pain relief. If this doesn't work, the pain may increase to the point that surgery becomes a possibility (joint repair or replacement).

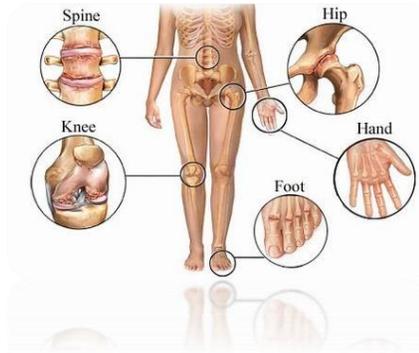
How do you manage arthritis?

There is no one best way to manage arthritis pain, and no single technique that is guaranteed to give you complete pain relief. In fact, a combination of methods work best.

Think of arthritis pain management as a continuing journey. And this is your travel guide – you can pick your itinerary based on how your symptoms are.

Step 1: Learn about your arthritis pain

Patient education is probably the most important step in pain management, according to the American Pain Society. Learn all you can about your arthritis so you can break down the mental roadblocks.



Exercise Is Your Answer

Step 2: Restore your muscle balance:

Regain posture. Proper posture is VERY important. Years of compensating for a sore/painful knee or hip can result in pain in the hip, knee, or even the ankle. Sitting slouched for hours, jutting the abdomen out when standing can lead to low back pain. Our physical therapists can observe how you sit, stand, and walk and teach you how to adjust your posture to decrease the stress on your joints, and help you move with less pain.

Exercise. Regular exercise helps strengthens joint-supporting muscles and improves flexibility. Our physical therapists specialize in arthritis treatment and can suggest appropriate movements that provide a full range of **motion**. Physical activity also helps blood circulation through the body and around the joints, which help bring oxygen and nutrients to help with the healing process. Also, did you know that losing 10 pounds of excess body weight takes roughly 30 to 60 pounds of pressure off the knee? So talk to one of our therapists to get you moving in the right direction!



- **Protect your joints.** Sore joints can stop you from doing your daily activities like bathing, dressing, writing and driving. We help you find alternative ways to perform your activities by strategically integrating 'rest periods' and avoiding tasks that trigger joint pain and discomfort

Our Locations:

4922 Columbia Road
Cedarburg, WI 53012
262-377-4077
email:
nsptcb@worc.net

136 N. Main Street
Suite 308
Thiensville, WI 53092
262-478-0920
email:
nspttv@worc.net

OR

While on vacation visit
our Florida location at:

Physical Therapy of
Sanibel
4301 Sanibel-Captiva Rd
Sanibel, FL 33957
239-395-1097

Do Try This At Home!

Step 3: Do-it-yourself pain relief

In addition to doing your exercises (that we prescribe), here are a few things you can do in the comfort of your own home:



- **Heat.** Warming tissues eases arthritis pain by increasing blood flow to the affected joints. It can help relax tight muscles and eliminate waste products like lactic acid that cause stiffness and soreness. Here is what you can do to increase temperature to affected joints:
 - Hot bath or Jacuzzi
 - Caution: If you have cardiac problems or if you are over age 70 (as we age, our bodies do not regulate heat as efficiently) check with your doctor first.
 - Heating pads
 - Caution: Although moist heat tends to be more effective than dry heat, you can use an electric heating pad. But be careful - it is estimated that 100,000 people burn themselves on it every year, so make sure you DO NOT fall asleep with it on! Read the instructions before use. Your physical therapist can teach you exactly how to use a heating pad for best results.
 - Contrast bath
 - Use warm water (110 deg F) and cold water (65 deg F) for areas like hands and feet. Put your hands/feet in warm water for 5 minutes, then in cold water for 1-2 minutes. Repeat this process up to 3 times to help decrease pain and swelling in the joint.
- **Cold therapy.** This includes ice pack, cold compression wraps, or ice massage. It works by decreasing the blood flow to the area to decrease swelling, and reducing the pain signals to the brain (making it less painful). After an acute flare-up, for the first 48-72 hours, use ice for up to 15-20 minutes to decrease pain and swelling.
- **Rest.** Be sure to rest the injured part. You can either relax your entire body, or the joint specifically by wearing a brace to protect and support the joint.

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