

Reducing Your Future Risk of Arthritis

27 million Americans currently suffer from arthritis. But how much do we actually know about the disease? Are we at risk of it affecting us one day? Does it only happen to older people or is the average person at risk too? Is there a way to protect us in advance, or is its arrival simply an inevitable occurrence amongst certain individuals?

These are questions we should all be asking ourselves now, while we are healthy and energetic, and have the possibility to prevent or at least delay the disease's later occurrence. For while arthritis typically sets in men ages 55 and over, and women ages 45 and over, that does not mean that what you do to your body now won't have an effect later on – because it does.

What do I need to know about arthritis in order to prevent it?

First off, it's important to distinguish between the two different types of osteoarthritis, primary and secondary. While primary arthritis is prevalent in older people due to the general “wear and tear” of using your joints, and is a natural function of living life, secondary arthritis is due to various factors such as obesity, physical activity, genetics and injury and can be prevented. By reading up on prevention and awareness tips you can help prevent the future onset of arthritis, or at least reduce the severity of the condition upon its arrival.

It should further be noted, that by having advance awareness of the disease, you stand a better chance of getting it diagnosed at its early stages, one of the key factors in the successful treatment of arthritis.

So what are the preventative steps I should be taking now?

Secondary arthritis can help be prevented as follows:

A. Keeping your weight under control – for every additional pound you gain, that's an extra three pounds of pressure you add to your knees and six times the amount of pressure you add to your hips. That's a tremendous amount of added strain on your bones and joints, which over time can cause great damage to your skeletal system and put you at a much higher risk of developing arthritis.

So make sure you do something about that extra weight now – or your body will pay the price later on.

B. Physical activity - it's important to receive a decent amount of physical activity to build strong muscles, particularly thigh muscles to support the daily strain we put on our knees. People that do not have strong enough muscles due to lack of exercise are at a much higher risk of developing arthritis. So make sure to get a decent amount of daily exercise. Swim, walk jog, whatever. Just get up and get moving.

C. Genetics – Genetics also play a large role in the development of arthritis. The inheritance of an abnormal bone structure can have a negative impact on the functioning of your joints, causing damage to to your cartilage and putting you at risk for arthritis.

If you have a close relative with arthritis, even if you aren't currently experiencing any of the symptoms, it's important to get yourself checked. Surprisingly, only one third of the people who have arthritis experience its symptoms, particularly during its early onset. And yet even if you don't know that the disease is present, that does not mean that the damage isn't slowly increasing. The earlier on you catch the disease the easier it is to treat. So if you have a relative with arthritis – make sure you let your doctor know, and make sure to get yourself checked from time to time.

D. Injuries – If you fractured or broke a a bone when you were younger, that also puts you at a higher risk for arthritis, so its important you get yourself checked from time to time. Also extreme athletes, or people involved in repetitive physical movement using the same joints (i.e. outdoor landscapers, construction workers, stenographers or typists) who put extensive amount of repeated stress on their joints face a higher risk of developing arthritis and should make sure to get themselves checked.

Unfortunately, arthritis is a degenerative disease and there is no cure currently available for it. That's why it is so important to do everything you can to reduce your risk of development, or at least to catch the disease earlier on in order to begin proper medical treatment.

About the Author

Anne McNealy is a professional freelance writer who contributes to a wide variety of health and nutrition web sites, including the [Good Nutrition Center](#) web site. A nutritional supplement she recommends to help alleviate arthritis pains is [Flex Protex](#)

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