

# Osteoarthritis of the hip

## Advice

The hip is a very deep and stable joint at the top of the leg. The head of the femur (the ball) articulates on the acetabulum (the socket). To allow smooth and easy movement these are covered in cartilage. Osteoarthritis refers to the normal age related thinning of this cartilage.

Although a normal process, it can be very painful and limiting. The symptoms can be improved with physiotherapy, especially aimed at strengthening key muscles around the knee; which act to support the joint.

It is not uncommon for people to experience a flare up of OA which can result in increased pain and stiffness. Most often this will settle, but can take up to 3 months to do so.

## What can I do to help?

**Rest:** It is usually best to try to carry out our normal activities in small amounts, you mustn't overdo it. You need to take things slowly, pace your activities and avoid movement that makes your pain worse.

**Ice:** If your knee is swollen and inflamed (warm to the touch) applying an ice pack may be helpful for reducing pain and swelling. A pack of frozen peas wrapped in a tea towel works well as an ice pack. Leave the peas in place for no more than 20 minutes at a time. This can be repeated several times a day.

**Pain relief:** Simple painkillers (like paracetamol) or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, NSAIDS, (like ibuprofen) are available over the counter and can be very effective but don't use them for more than 2 weeks without seeking medical advice. You should carefully read the Patient Information Leaflet that is provided with this medication.

It is advisable to consult your GP or pharmacist before taking additional pain relief if you are currently:

- taking any form of medication
- have any other pre-existing medical conditions
- pregnant

**Exercise:** Using exercise to maintain healthy movement and good strength of your joints is very important and one of the best ways of managing arthritis. It will not cause your hip joint to worsen, however it is normal to experience a little post exercise discomfort from starting a new type of exercise.

## Exercises to try:

Please try each one 10-15 times, 2-3 times a day. Some discomfort is normal as you may be moving muscles which are tight or stiff. Please stop them if they aggravate your pain.

### 1. Bridge



Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.

Cross your arms over your chest.

Tilt your pelvis so that your lower back is pressing into the bed then lift your hips up towards the ceiling by squeezing your buttock muscles.

Lift your hips until there is a straight line between your knees and shoulders or as high as you can.

Slowly lower back down to starting position.

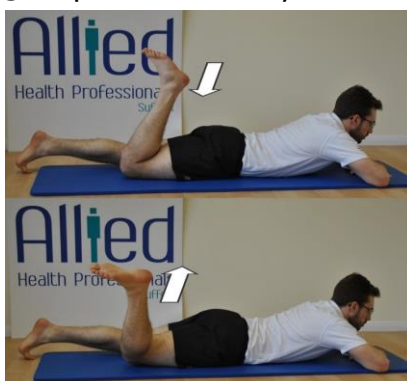
### 2. Hip abduction in side lying



Lie on your side with the hip you want strengthening on top. Bend your bottom leg and straighten your top leg.

Slowly lift your leg up and down.

### 3. Hip rotation on your stomach



Lying on your front with one knee bent.

Rotate your hip allowing your foot to drop outward. Return to the start position