

# VERSUS ARTHRITIS



**ACCOMPANYING BOOKLET**



**FOR BEFORE AND AFTER SURGERY**

**VERSUS  
ARTHRITIS**



# The importance of exercise

Exercising at the right level for you is crucial to managing pain from arthritis. Take a look at the tips in this booklet and speak to your healthcare professional if you have further questions.

## The benefits of exercise

- **Strengthen joints:** The more you exercise, the stronger your muscles, tendons, and bones will get, which support your joints.
- **Manage pain:** Exercise stimulates the production of synovial fluid which lubricates joints and can reduce pain.
- **Boost your mood:** During exercise, your body releases hormones that make you feel better.
- **Sleep better:** Regular exercise can help regulate your circadian rhythm. Between that and reduced pain, this can really improve the quality and quantity of sleep you get, which can improve all aspects of your health and wellbeing.
- **Make sure you are fit for surgery:** Exercise improves your heart and lung health, which will ensure you're ready for surgery.
- **Improve your recovery after surgery:** Exercising in the lead up to surgery is associated with faster recovery times.
- **Manage weight:** Exercise can help manage your weight which can improve overall health, reduce risks associated with surgery as well as reduce pressure on painful joints.
- **Can help with other health problems:** such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

***“The senior nurse said, ‘Do these exercises religiously between now and your operation. The day after the operation you are going to be flying.’ And she was right.”***  
***– Lin, underwent hip replacement***



# Common myths about exercising with arthritis



## Myth

## Truth

***Exercise will further damage my joint.***

Exercise can actually help your joint. And a lack of movement can lead to stiffness and more pain. Think of exercise as a lubricant that keeps joints healthy.

***Pain from exercise is bad for my joint.***

A slight increase in pain during or after exercise is common, and very normal. If it continues for more than a day after exercise, you may have done too much. This doesn't mean you have caused damage to your joint though, just that you may need to make some changes to your exercise routine. Speak to your healthcare professional if you have any questions.

***Exercise doesn't help for osteoarthritis.***

Don't be put off if you do not notice changes straight away. It may take 10-12 weeks of exercising consistently before you really notice benefits to your symptoms. Stick with it!

***You have to exercise at the gym.***

Exercising at a gym is great if that's something you enjoy, but it is not necessary. There is lots you can do at home and in the outdoor environment around you.

***Exercise is useless unless you do 30 minutes every day.***

There are recommendations about the amount of exercise we should strive for, but something is always better than nothing. Starting small will help you form habits and build up to doing more exercise. When you are just beginning, do what feels manageable and be proud of your achievements.



# Tips for getting and staying on track

- **Exercise little and often:** It's better to do a little bit each day than overdo it one day and need to completely rest the next. If you can't do as much of an exercise as you intended, do some now and come back to it again tomorrow. Every little bit helps.
- **Listen to your body:** Check in with yourself. If pain lingers after an exercise, make it easier next time. Or, if you feel an exercise is too easy, explore the options to increase the difficulty.
- **Add to existing habits:** Think about what exercises you could do alongside things that are already part of your daily routine. This will help you make exercise a habit, and can help you do it every day without even taking any special effort.

*“My favourite one is calf raises when I'm brushing my teeth. So every day now, when I brush my teeth, I do 20 calf raises.” – Keir, underwent knee replacement*

- **Make a plan:** Knowing what you want to do ahead of time can make it easier when it's time to go and do the exercise because you'll already know what you need do. You can also plan when you're going to do it for a time that makes it most achievable for you (such as adding it to an existing habit).
- **Set achievable goals:** If your goals are too ambitious, you might end up feeling you will never get there. Keep them realistic so you can see yourself getting closer. Once you achieve one, you can always set a new one.
- **Try new activities until you find what you like:** You may not be able to do everything you did in the past. Explore new activities, and when you find something you like, stick with it. If an activity feels like a chore it will be much harder to do it, but if it's something you enjoy, you may well look forward to it instead.
- **Find support in a community:** For example, you could share experiences and your commitment to physical activity with family and friends, workout buddies, volunteer for a local group, join our Let's Move Versus Arthritis Facebook group.

*“Surround yourself with people that you love who will support you, because that will make an enormous difference.” – Lin, underwent hip replacement*



# Dealing with difficult days

It is very normal to deal with setbacks or ‘flare ups’ of pain. The key is in how you respond to this.

- **Take a few days of relative rest:** Do less than normal and avoid the most painful activities, but don’t stop moving altogether. Keep trying to do little bits of exercise as your pain allows.
- **Control the controllables:** While you may not be able to move around or exercise as normal, try to focus on positive things you still can do.
- **Consider ways you can manage your pain:** Such as heat or ice packs.
- **Ensure you are getting enough sleep:** Your body does its best healing during sleep, so getting enough will help you recover.
- **Maintain a healthy diet:** With plenty of lean protein and fruit and vegetables.
- **Slowly increase your activity again:** Work your way back up bit by bit. Focus on incremental improvement and celebrate the small wins.
- **Track your progress:** If you can look back at what you were able to do a month ago, you will be reminded of how far you have come.

*“You need to have that flexibility and not be down on yourself that I haven’t managed to do what I wanted to do.” – Keir, underwent knee replacement*



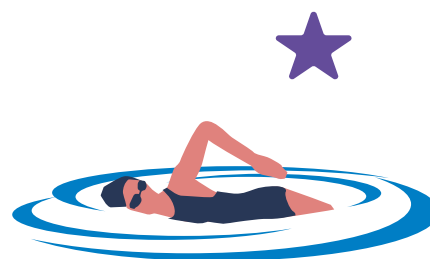
# Maintaining a healthy weight

Maintaining a healthy weight can reduce pain related to knee and hip arthritis and is a key part of managing your joint pain and undergoing surgery.

For more information and support regarding weight loss, take a look online:

[www.nhs.uk/better-health/lose-weight](http://www.nhs.uk/better-health/lose-weight)

Alongside healthy eating, improving sleep and stress levels, exercise is crucial to managing your weight. You may find that it is difficult to exercise because of your joint pain. Think creatively about different forms of exercise you may be able to take part in. For example, you may not be able to walk too far because of your joint pain but swimming, cycling, or seated exercises could be used as an alternative. Always speak to a healthcare professional if you are unsure.



# The Versus Arthritis Surgery Toolkit films

This series of films was created with you in mind, and features exercises you can do at home that are specially tailored to preparing for and recovering from surgery. Films are presented by NHS physiotherapist Milly Abdullah and feature people living with arthritis who have gone through or are awaiting surgery.

- 01 Hip replacement exercises for before and after surgery:** A follow along video featuring a range of exercises for your hip that you can do at home.
- 02 Knee replacement exercises for before and after surgery:** A follow along video featuring a range of exercises for your knee that you can do at home.
- 03 Shoulder replacement exercises for before and after surgery:** A follow along video featuring a range of exercises for your shoulder that you can do at home.
- 04 Full body strengthening for before and after surgery:** A follow along video featuring a range of exercises that you can do at home to help strengthen muscles across your whole body.
- 05 Cardio workout for before and after surgery:** A follow along video featuring a range of exercises you can do at home to improve your overall fitness.
- 06 How to use 'Let's move with Leon':** A film that explains how you can adapt the 'Let's Move With Leon' series of films in order to use them as part of your preparation for or recovery from surgery.
- 07 Why it's important to keep joints mobile:** An animation explaining the science of the benefits of exercise on your joints.
- 08 Why movement is so important pre-surgery:** Expert advice from an NHS physio and testimonials from people living with arthritis about how exercising whilst waiting for surgery will help you now and in recovery.
- 09 Why movement is so important post-surgery:** Expert advice from an NHS physio and testimonials from people living with arthritis about how exercising after surgery is key to regaining your mobility and independence.
- 10 How to keep active whilst waiting for surgery:** Expert advice from an NHS physio and testimonials from people living with arthritis including top tips for getting started with physical activity and staying motivated.

***“After the surgery do what the consultant tells you. Do what the physio tells you, and just do it. And it would really make a huge difference.” – Sue, underwent knee replacement***

***“You don't need a gym membership with the recovery because so many of the exercises you can do in your home with the things that you would have anyway.” – Keir, underwent knee replacement***



# The Let's Move Monthly Tracker

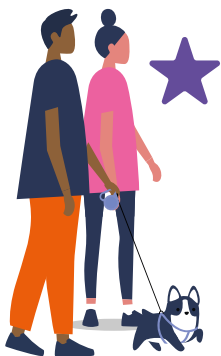


## My **LET'S MOVE** Tracker



MONTH:

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					
Sunday					



***“Now I can walk ten miles and I walk my dog every day for maybe two or three miles.”***

***– Sue, underwent knee replacement***

***“I was proud of myself for sticking to that regime every day, doing the exercises because there was a lot at stake and I knew that I had to take responsibility for myself in that respect.”***

***– Lin, underwent hip replacement***





## GOALS

### MY LONG TERM GOALS

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### MY SHORT TERM GOALS

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## PLAN

What activity I will do and when:

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Who with:

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I'll remind myself by:

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On a difficult day I will:

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## NOTES



(pain, modifications, etc)

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*"I wanted to set myself some clear goals. I think it really helps whenever you're on a journey in any respect and recovery is definitely one. The goals need to be achievable."*  
– Keir, underwent knee replacement

# Helpful resources

## **Versus Arthritis – Let’s Move**

Visit [www.versusarthritis.org/exercise](http://www.versusarthritis.org/exercise) to find the Surgery Toolkit and find out about other physical activity series offered by Versus Arthritis including tailored stretching videos for different parts of the body, full body stretch routines and full body workouts. All of the videos can also easily be found on the Versus Arthritis YouTube channel. Sign up to the ‘Let’s Move’ newsletter to receive content to inspire you get active and hear stories from people whose lives have been transformed by movement. ‘Let’s Move Versus Arthritis’ is a community on Facebook for people to come together and share support, hints and tips for being active. Find out more or join the group at: [www.facebook.com/groups/letsmovewithversusarthritis](https://www.facebook.com/groups/letsmovewithversusarthritis) or search for ‘Let’s Move Versus Arthritis’ on Facebook.

## **We Are Undefeatable**

We Are Undefeatable is a campaign supporting people with a range of long-term conditions, including arthritis. The website has a range of inspiring stories, suggested exercises and tips to get started. Visit: [www.weareundefeatable.co.uk](http://www.weareundefeatable.co.uk)

## **NHS My Planned Care**

Advice and Support whilst waiting for surgery. My Planned Care gives you advice and support while you wait and helps you to prepare for your hospital consultation, treatment, or surgery. This includes giving you information about waiting times at your hospital and other supporting and local services while you wait.

Visit: [www.myplannedcare.nhs.uk](http://www.myplannedcare.nhs.uk)

## **NHS Sleep and tiredness – Managing sleep**

Every Mind Matters provides information on how to manage and sleep better. If you’re having sleep problems, there are simple steps you can take to improve your sleep hygiene, get into a daily routine and ease those restless nights. Find out how to get to sleep and how to sleep better.

Visit: [www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-health-issues/sleep](http://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-health-issues/sleep)

## **NHS – Maintaining a healthy weight**

Healthy changes start with little changes. Whether you want to lose weight, get active or quit smoking, Better Health is here with lots of free tools and support.

Visit: [www.nhs.uk/better-health/lose-weight](http://www.nhs.uk/better-health/lose-weight)

## **Royal College of Anaesthetists**

Visit: [www.rcoa.ac.uk/patients/preparing-surgery-fitter-better-sooner](http://www.rcoa.ac.uk/patients/preparing-surgery-fitter-better-sooner)

## **Chartered Society of Physiotherapy**

Stronger My Way delivers physio-approved, reliable advice to help you maintain and improve your strength – and let you do the things that matter the most.

Visit: [www.csp.org.uk/public-patient](http://www.csp.org.uk/public-patient)

### **Ramblers Wellbeing Walks**

The Ramblers Wellbeing Walks make it easier to start walking and stay active.

Visit: [www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking/ramblers-wellbeing-walks.aspx](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking/ramblers-wellbeing-walks.aspx)

### **Paths for All**

Paths for All want to increase the number of people walking every day in Scotland to improve wellbeing and prevent ill health.

Visit: [www.pathsforall.org.uk](http://www.pathsforall.org.uk)

### **Royal College of Anaesthetists**

Royal College of Anaesthetists have produced patient information and resources about anaesthesia.

Visit: [www.rcoa.ac.uk/patients](http://www.rcoa.ac.uk/patients)

### **Just Swim**

Just Swim has information for people at all stages of swimming, including people who want to learn. Their website also has the Poolfinder to find more information on local pools, swimming clubs and accessibility.

Visit: [www.swimming.org/justswim](http://www.swimming.org/justswim)

### **Good Boost**

Good Boost uses technology to create water or land-based exercise programmes for people with arthritis or related conditions.

Visit: [www.goodboost.ai](http://www.goodboost.ai) to find out more, search for nearby classes or download the Move Together app.

### **Mind**

Physical Activity and your mental health. Mind provide information and support about how physical activity can help your mental health, and tips for choosing an activity that works for you, and how to overcome anything that might stop you from becoming more active.

Visit: [www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/physical-activity-and-your-mental-health/about-physical-activity](http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/physical-activity-and-your-mental-health/about-physical-activity)

We are Versus Arthritis. We won't rest until everyone with arthritis has access to the treatments and support they need to live the life they choose with real hope of a cure in the future. To deliver our mission we invest in world class research, deliver high quality services and campaign on the issues that matter most to people with arthritis. We're here for you. If you'd like to talk to someone:

Call our free helpline, Monday to Friday 9am-6pm, on **0800 5200 520**

Email **[helpline@versusarthritis.org](mailto:helpline@versusarthritis.org)**

Join our online community at **[community.versusarthritis.org](https://community.versusarthritis.org)**

Sign up for our newsletter at **[www.versusarthritis.org/signup](https://www.versusarthritis.org/signup)**

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**For more information, please visit our website: [www.versusarthritis.org](https://www.versusarthritis.org)**

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