

# Weight Gain and Joint Pain



## Why Is Your Weight Important?

**Extra weight greatly increases joint pain and damages the cartilage of the joints, especially in the hips and knees. But losing weight can help!**

### WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

#### Risks

- Together, extra pounds and pain can limit physical activity. This leads to more weight gain and other health problems. This can cause permanent disability and loss of income.
- Joint pain sometimes disrupts sleep, which can make your health worse.
- People affected by excess weight are more likely to need prolonged medical therapy including medications.
- People affected by excess weight are more likely to need costly knee or hip surgery and a long period of recovery.

#### Benefits

- Losing weight can help you reduce joint pain, avoid joint surgery and become more active again.
- Even small amounts of weight loss can help.

Managing your weight through a healthy diet and increased physical activity can help you reduce your joint pain. But don't try to make too many changes at once. It can stop you in your tracks. Instead, pick just one thing you feel ready to focus on for the next few weeks. Choose a goal you believe you can achieve. Then work on it for 6 to 8 weeks to make it stick.

Wendy had been having trouble sleeping on her side because her hips would hurt and the pain would wake her up. She connected her excess weight and hip pain almost by mistake. Losing 15 pounds reduced her hip pain and allowed her to get a good night's sleep.

# Making Changes

## TIPS TO GET YOU ON YOUR WAY

There are many ways to get started. Here are a few ideas to choose from or you can make up your own:

- Cut back on portion sizes.
- Eliminate foods from your home that promote overeating.
- Keep fresh fruit on hand for snacks.
- Go for a walk after dinner.
- Turn off the TV during dinner.
- Move the TV out of the bedroom.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Add a vegetable to either lunch or dinner (or both) each day.
- Pack your own lunch each day.
- Make a new friend who wants to walk several days a week.
- Buy a pedometer to track your steps taken each day.
- Buy a bicycle and use it to ride to work or on weekends.
- Plan a hiking vacation to a state or national park.
- Join a physical activity program.



Jerry knew that the pounds had been creeping up for several years, but he didn't make the connection between the extra weight and the pain in his knees. The connection dawned on Jerry when his friend and former tennis partner lost 30 pounds and started playing tennis again. Jerry realized he wanted to play tennis with Steve, so he decided to lose weight.



**DID YOU KNOW?**  
1 pound of weight loss = 4 pounds of relief for your knees  
15 pounds of weight loss can cut knee pain in HALF

# Are You Ready to Make Changes to Manage Your Weight?

## WHERE CAN I FIND HELP TO MAKE LIFESTYLE CHANGES?

Managing your weight can improve your joint pain. Here are some websites that can help you adopt a healthier lifestyle:

- **CHOOSE MY PLATE** – [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)  
Learn about healthy eating, meal planning and portion control.
- **EAT RIGHT** – [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)  
Get tips on nutrition and weight loss or find a registered dietitian in your area.
- **SHAPE UP AMERICA!** – [www.shapeup.org](http://www.shapeup.org)  
Check out the CyberKitchen, the Shape Up & Drop 10 program and the Fitness Center.
- **TRACK + REACT** – [www.arthritistoday.org/tools-and-resources/tools/track-and-react/](http://www.arthritistoday.org/tools-and-resources/tools/track-and-react/)  
This new web tool and app allows people with arthritis to track their physical activity, diet and symptoms.
- **WALK WITH EASE** – [www.arthritis.org/wwe](http://www.arthritis.org/wwe)  
Learn about this physical activity program for people with arthritis and other chronic conditions. It has been shown to reduce pain and improve health.
- **OBESITY ACTION COALITION** – [www.obesityaction.org](http://www.obesityaction.org)  
Learn more about how obesity impacts your health, treatment options and weight bias.
- **YOUR WEIGHT MATTERS** – [www.yourweightmatters.org](http://www.yourweightmatters.org)  
Take the Your Weight Matters Challenge today and talk to your healthcare provider about your weight.
- **AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR NUTRITION** – [www.nutrition.org](http://www.nutrition.org)  
Find valuable resources to help you live a healthier, more productive life, including scientific statements on topics like energy balance and the latest nutrition research.

**Don't Overdo It.  
Small Changes  
Lead to Big Health  
Benefits!**

## On Your Mark, Get Set, Go!

Commit to making a change. Fill out the action plan below and keep it attached to your refrigerator or mirror so you can see it every day and stay motivated. Use the resources above to help you reach your goal.

### MY ACTION PLAN

Today's Date is: \_\_\_\_\_ My weight today is: \_\_\_\_\_

My current measure of pain is: 😊 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ☹️ (circle a number)

I want to lose \_\_\_\_\_ pounds in \_\_\_\_\_ months.

The reason I want to take off 10 pounds is (fill in the reason below): \_\_\_\_\_

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The single change in my lifestyle that I am tackling right now is: \_\_\_\_\_

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The Osteoarthritis (OA) Action Alliance is a national coalition of concerned organizations mobilized by the Arthritis Foundation and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This coalition is committed to elevating OA as a national health priority and promoting effective policy solutions that aim to address the individual and national toll of OA. In addition, the OA Action Alliance, with the public health community, is working to ensure people with OA have the access, skills and capacity to benefit from effective and proven interventions.

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