

# OSTEOARTHRITIS

## FROM AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST'S PERSPECTIVE

### DESCRIPTION

- Osteoarthritis (OA), sometimes referred to as degenerative joint disease, is a deterioration of the moving parts of the joints
- Occurs when the cartilage in your joints wears down over time or due to injury
- Most commonly affects joints in your:
  - Hands
  - Lower back
  - Hips
  - Neck
  - Knees
- As no cure exists, OA can worsen over time, but great strides have been made, and various treatments can relieve pain and help you remain active

### SYMPTOMS

usually develop slowly and worsen over time:

- Pain—your joint may hurt during or after movement
- Tenderness—your joints may feel tender when light pressure is applied
- Stiffness—joint stiffness may be most noticeable when you wake up in the mornings or after periods of inactivity
- Loss of flexibility—you may not be able to move your joint through its full range of motion
- Grating sensation—you may feel or hear grating when using the joint
- Bone spurs—which feel like hard lumps—may form around the affected joint

### RISK FACTORS

- Older age—typically occurs in older adults (40+)
- Sex—women are more likely to develop OA
- Bone deformities—people born with malformed joints or defective cartilage
- Joint injuries—sports injuries, etc. can increase the risk of OA
- Obesity—carrying more body weight can add more stress to your joints
- Certain occupations—repetitive tasks placing stress on a particular joint

### TREATMENT

can reduce pain and help maintain joint movement so that you can go about your daily tasks with as much enjoyment as possible.

Occupational and physical therapists can create personal exercise programs to strengthen muscles around your joint to take stress off and increase range of motion and decrease overall pain.

Occupational therapy can help shorten your recovery time and decrease or eliminate long-term consequences.

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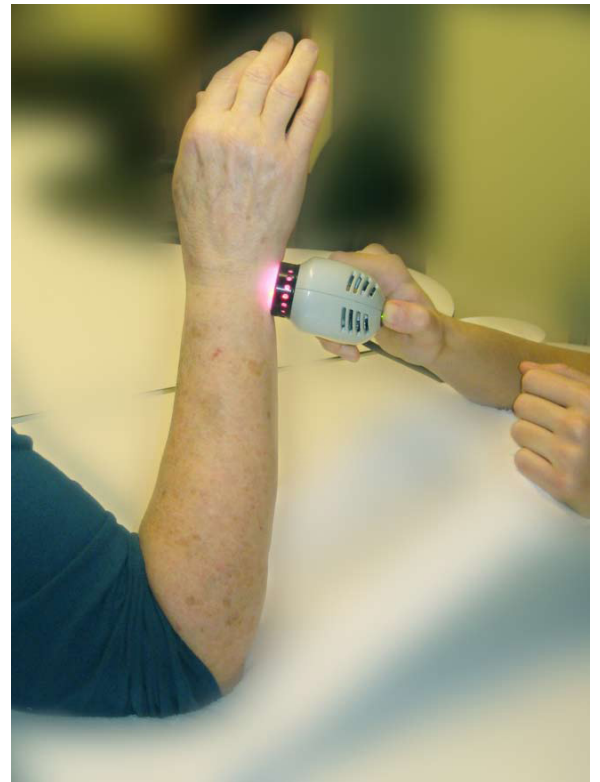
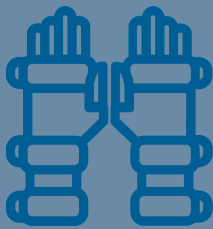


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## Occupational therapists:

Utilize any or all of the following treatment options:

- Heat
- Massage
- Ice
- Light therapy
- Create an individual exercise program to increase ROM and decrease pain
- Identify activities which aggravate the joint
- Suggest braces or splinting



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