



Tarpon, P.A. - 972.596.1059

5425 W Spring Creek Parkway , Suite 100, Plano, TX 75024
4325 North Josey Lane, Plaza III, Suite 203, Carrollton, TX 75010

TarponPA.com

Arthritis: It's better to keep moving...

by Ainsworth B. Farrell, M.D.

As we all get older, the normal “wear and tear” that we put on our bodies eventually catches up with us in our joints. For the most part, no one can say for sure why some people develop arthritis earlier than others. But it's safe to say that by the time we turn seventy-five years old, we all will be dealing with some joint pain from this condition. People who develop joint pain early in life are usually very active individuals, such as athletes or heavy laborers, who unintentionally damage their joints and cause the development of arthritic pain to begin earlier than one would like.

Generally, arthritis is an inflammatory condition and there are many forms of this ailment. **Osteoarthritis (OA)** is the most common type of arthritis. OA is also the most common cause of joint pain in adults. Painful symptoms usually begin as a gradual process over several years as a dull, aching, throbbing pain that steadily becomes worse over time. It typically begins in larger, weight bearing joints, such as the hip or knee, but may occur in any joint. At times, the joint may feel stiff and/or swollen. Mornings are usually the time of day where symptoms of stiffness are the worst and it usually takes up to half-an-hour to begin feeling better. But as the day continues, and the joint is used more frequently, the joint becomes painful until there is a chance to rest the joint by either sitting down or stopping the painful activity. Eventually, as the pain increases, the muscles around the joint become weaker because most people would like to move a body part that hurts less. This is a natural protective response. Unfortunately, by moving less, this allows the muscles around the joint to become weaker. And allowing the muscles to become weaker only causes the pain to become worse because the joint becomes less stable and easier to irritate.

The first step in solving the problem of joint pain is to be sure the diagnosis is correct. So it is important that you work with your doctor to be sure that your pain is because of OA, and not something else. Of the treatment options available for OA, remaining active is by far the most important. People who remain active and physically in-touch with their family and friends are less likely to get depressed, which is only another factor that can increase the pain experience. Working with your doctor and a certified physical therapist to develop a well-designed exercise program to help stabilize painful joints will not only help reduce pain, but will also allow one to remain socially connected with those around them. By increasing and maintaining muscle strength, there is also less of a feeling of fatigue and being

“out of shape” when performing tasks that were once easy to complete. Finally, with stronger muscles, more stable joints and less fatigue, one suffering from arthritic pain will notice that it will take less medication, as well as less time with the doctor, to control that pain.

In conclusion, the best way to help your body fight against arthritis pain is to keep moving, maintain your muscle strength, and don't allow yourself to become socially isolated and away from family and friends. All of these factors combined should help you maintain a happier and healthier lifestyle.