

# The trouble with joints



IF YOU GET PAINS IN YOUR JOINTS, YOU MAY HAVE ARTHRITIS. DR ELLIE CANNON EXPLAINS HOW TO IDENTIFY IT, AND WHAT TO DO TO HELP EASE THE CONDITION...

According to Arthritis Research UK, around 10 million people have some form of arthritis – a condition that causes joint pain and inflammation. There are different types but, most commonly, people get osteoarthritis as they age, when joints suffer wear and tear. Here's how to look after your joints to stay pain-free...

## KNEES UP

Osteoarthritis becomes more common from age 40 onwards, thought to be due to weakening muscles and the body being less able to repair itself. Joints will develop arthritis earlier in people who 'overuse' them, such as professional athletes, or if your work involves repetitive movements. It's more common in women, and is also usually worse than in men, particularly in knees and hands.

## TRY A TABLET

Glucosamine is a natural substance normally found in joint cartilage, and some health professionals recommend it as a supplement to help joints, particularly the knees. At one time, GPs would prescribe it, but most no longer do – the scientific evidence showing it helps is conflicting, so we can't quite be sure if it does or not. If you want to try it for yourself, ask your pharmacist for guidance.



## LOSE WEIGHT

Keep your weight down! Being overweight is a well-known cause of arthritis, particularly in the knees, which carry the main weight of the body. Being bigger is known to make arthritis worsen due to the general strain it puts on joints, so anything you can do to lose weight will help.

It can be hard to exercise with arthritis due to pain or stiffness, but swimming is good, as it keeps the pressure off your joints.

## HAPPY FEET

It's not just excess weight that puts a strain on your joints: your shoes can, too! If you're worried about developing osteoarthritis, or already have it, then choose sensible shoes that take the pressure off your joints. Flat shoes with thick soles act like shock absorbers, relieving the strain on your hips, knees and even your lower back. So, keep those high heels for special occasions!



## FIGHT THE PAIN

There are no tablets that cure osteoarthritis, or even slow its progress. When a GP prescribes treatment, it's usually painkillers. These can be paracetamol or ibuprofen, but sometimes much stronger codeine-based or anti-inflammatory drugs are needed. Painkillers in gel form are particularly good for hand and knee arthritis, as the gel can get right into the joints.



## STAY STRONG

Strength exercises are very important for osteoarthritis sufferers. This type of exercise is not about weight loss, but building up the muscles that hold and support the joints. Strength exercises are known to reduce the pain of arthritis, protecting the joints and making them more stable. Building up the thigh muscles (known as the quadriceps), for example, will strengthen and support the knee. Ask your GP for a referral to a physiotherapist.

## TAKE CARE

Make sure you look after your whole self, not just your joints! Arthritis's chief problem for sufferers is pain, and daily pain can affect many aspects of your life, from your sleep and mood to your relationships. Concentrate on making sure you get a good night's sleep – take painkillers before bed if necessary, and wind down properly. If you're feeling low, speak to your family and consider asking your GP for help.

# Look younger with Lesley



Anti-ageing guru **Lesley Reynolds** reveals the latest treatments to help you stay youthful

Cosmetic chin treatments are big business, with bookings increasing by 60 per cent. Here's how to keep your chin up and give your lower face a makeover...

## SMOOTH OUT CHIN DIMPLES

Over time, the skin on your chin can develop criss-cross lines and small dimples. This is thanks to the repeat action of muscles called the mentalis in the area, so your chin scrunches up, deepening any creases. 'Chellulite', as it's sometimes called, can be eradicated with a jab of Botox to iron out creases and help relax the muscles. Results will last up to six months. From £199.

## RESHAPE WITH FILLERS

The size and position of your chin plays a very important part in how your face looks, because it can make your nose and lips appear either larger or smaller. Chin chiselling – a way to remodel the face shape – improves symmetry and no longer requires surgery. Fillers, given in a 30-minute procedure, give the same effect as a chin implant without the downtime, although you can expect some bruising and tenderness for a week. Results last up to 18 months. From £450.



## SLIM A DOUBLE CHIN

Probably the most common weight-gain woe, you can melt away 'extra' chins with FaceTite. A radio frequency probe, inserted via a tiny incision, warms tissue, removes excess fat and boosts collagen production, leading to tighter skin. Just one treatment is needed, under local anaesthetic. Results are instant – although there can be some temporary swelling – and continue to improve over three to six months. Expect to pay from £2,800.

## AND DON'T FORGET...

- Neck exercises are an excellent way to tone the chin and jaw. Try this daily: sit upright, tilt your head back and look at the ceiling, keeping lips closed, then make chewing movements. Repeat 20 times.
- Sun exposure and smoking can cause chin wrinkles, so always wear sunscreen and try not to smoke. A vitamin C serum will improve the signs of skin damage.
- Treat your chin to the ChinUp Mask, £29.95 for two treatments, an ingenious new non-surgical option to help lift, firm and contour the chin and neck. The kit includes a nourishing mask plus a slimming band, designed to tighten your face from the chin up, with results lasting up to five days.

For more information on Lesley and her team of doctors, please visit [harleystreetskinclinic.com](http://harleystreetskinclinic.com)