

# Winter and Joint Pain



**A**s winter arrives many people with Osteoarthritis will tell you that they can 'feel it in their bones and joints'. Osteoarthritis is the degenerative type of arthritis affecting the articular cartilage and underlying bones in our joints. The most common symptoms include pain, stiffness, swelling, lack of stability, and limited range of movement. Managing these symptoms is vital to maintaining and improving your well-being all year round, and especially during the winter months when for reasons unknown they seem to worsen.

"KEEP IT MOVING!" When you stop moving your joints become stiff with decreased range of motion, and your muscles start to lose strength and muscle mass. This combination may result in decreased stability, support, increased stiffness, and pain around the joint. That is why it is crucial to stay active. The seemingly "vicious cycle" with arthritis makes us want to move less due to the pain we are experiencing, yet this lack of motion further increases our pain and decreases our mobility. To break this cycle, a regular exercise program, which can simply be walking regularly, may help decrease pain and medication use. Strength training the muscles around your sore joint will also help to improve joint pain and stability. Pilates is an effective exercise practice for loosening up stiff joints while decreasing pain and increasing range of motion. Weight loss also aids the process to pain free movement by lessening



the pressure of the weight on your joints and while moving your limb.

If you find that the 'KEEP IT MOVING' practices have not eased your symptoms, physiotherapy, non surgical and minimally invasive procedures may prove to be highly beneficial in managing these pain and discomfort all year around, not only during the winter months.

Dr. Ralph Rogers, founder of RRMG, is a Consultant in Sports and Musculoskeletal Medicine who uses his wealth of experience to effectively tackle chronic pain and acute discomfort. ■

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