



# Christmas With Osteoarthritis

by ALI ESFAHANI

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## What People With Osteoarthritis Really Want for Christmas

Christmas really is a beautiful time; everyone seems happier, people are yet to be tired of the cold of winter, and most importantly, there are presents to be given!

There are some things people with osteoarthritis (OA) are really looking for this holiday season:

### **Rechargeable Heat Pads**

Who wouldn't want a warm rechargeable heat pad or blanket during the bone-chilling weather of winter? Heat application is thought to ease pain by dilating the blood vessels surrounding the painful area, increasing blood flow, and helping to increase the flexibility of stiff tissues.

Most importantly, it feels great! Rechargeable blankets or pads are sold at most retailers and can go for hours on end! But be careful, heat pads can burn your skin if left on too long!

### **A Massager**

Like heat pads, who wouldn't want a quality massager for Christmas? Massagers are wonderful but can also be on the pricey side, thus making it a quality gift idea. The idea behind massage is that the rubbing motion helps to accelerate healing by bringing nutrients and oxygen to the tissues being massaged.

### **A Quality Nap**

No matter where I'm at or what time of day it is, I can always use a good nap! Many people with chronic pain have trouble sleeping, and because of this suffer from fatigue.

A nap between the holiday festivities with the relief from aching and sore joints is a blessing for those that lack quality sleep on a consistent basis. However, make sure your naps are less than an hour long, because otherwise they can mess with the quality of sleep you have at night.

### **Knowing How Much You Mean to Someone**

All of us want to hear is that we are loved and appreciated, and what better way to show that than with a heartfelt card? Support can be very helpful in breaking a person out of their mental state brought on by pain, and ultimately better cope with the condition.

Plus, I find it easier to write down my thoughts and give it to someone else than verbalize them in-person. This should be a popular gift item because it doesn't cost much, but would mean a lot to an OA sufferer!

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## **To Be Surrounded by Friends and Family**

Similar to being told that we are loved and appreciated, all many of us want is to be surrounded by those we love and care about during this time of the year. What is this season of merriment and joy when it's not shared with our loved ones?

People often don't realize your time and attention is one of the most valuable assets you can give a person. Many of us would actually prefer quality time spent with those we care about than fancy gifts or gift cards to stores that we rarely go to.

If you know one of your loved ones has trouble traveling because of OA, why not bring the holidays to them with a visit? Although Christmas is a great time for many, loneliness and depression can be amplified during this time of the year. So make sure those you love don't have to feel left out of the festivities, and include them in any way you can.

## **A Pet**

Pets can help alleviate the extent and symptoms of depression or anxiety, which are often accentuated during the holiday season. Research has shown pets decrease feelings of depression, loneliness and isolation.

They can also help one to feel like they are socializing even if they can't physically make it to their local holiday party. Lastly, I encourage anyone who is getting a pet to adopt. That way you save an animal while also receiving a new friend!

## **Adequate Pain Relief**

Although this is an obvious one, it's one that many of us with OA have trouble achieving. I believe I speak on the behalf of most OA sufferers when I say we would like a long-term, side-effect-free modality that provides adequate pain relief for our condition.

It sounds very simple, but unfortunately it can be very difficult for an arthritic sufferer to find a modality that is safe and cost-effective long-term. So until Santa comes along with the perfect pain-reliever, I guess we will settle for any alternative methods that work.

Happy holidays everyone!