Maintaining Flexibility

by AMY MANLEY

Osteoarthritis Flexibility

If you suffer from OA, you know how difficult it can be to go throughout your day with the aches and pains it causes. While medical treatment is needed to ease the symptoms of your OA, you'll need a backup plan to get rid of the existing pain that occurs on a daily basis.

Luckily, there's specific exercises and stretches you can use to help improve and manage your flexibility. By learning more about these techniques, you can incorporate them into your daily routine and start reaping the benefits.

Importance of Flexibility

Flexibility goes beyond the ability to stretch your limbs. When you're unable to maintain good flexibility, simple tasks like getting out of bed or walking up the stairs can prove to be difficult. The reasoning behind this is that the muscles and limbs become stiff, which leads to pain and lack of mobility in the area. The pain and stiffness can be moderate to severe, but regardless of the severity, it can have a major negative impact on your well-being and quality of life.

If you're experiencing difficulty getting out of bed and going about your day due to the stiffness that occurs with OA, imagine your life if you were able to get up and go through the day free from pain. By using the right stretching and exercise techniques, this could become a daily reality for you.

Both exercising and stretching help prevent stiffness and pain by stretching the muscles and tendons in the body, which prevents them from locking up. Likewise, these activities help to reduce tightness within the joints, one major area of impact for those with OA. The more often you take part in these activates, the less likely you'll be to have stiffness and the better you'll feel throughout your day.

Benefits of Exercise and Stretching

The exercises and stretches used to prevent stiffness and pain for OA patients offer numerous additional benefits. They include:

- Reducing the amount of pressure on joints by reducing weight
- Increasing strength in the body
- Helps prevent locking of the joints
- Keeps both bone and tissue in the joints strong
- Works to improve endurance
- Helps maintain cardiovascular fitness

Exercises to Maintain Flexibility

The best exercises to help you gain and maintain flexibility are range-of-motion exercises. This form of exercise helps to relieve pain within the joints and, as the name suggests, increase range of motion. They also work to relieve pressure from holding a joint in the same position for a prolonged period of time. These exercises can be found online with a quick Google search.

Stretching is also great for improving flexibility for OA patients. Helpful movements range from gentle stretching of each limb, to more in-depth pre-workout stretches. By stretching out your limbs, you're helping extend range of motion in your muscles and tendons.

Another effective technique used to improve mobility for OA patients is called hydrotherapy. This is also referred to as water therapy, and each exercise is done in a body of water like a pool.

Water therapy is a popular technique among those with OA because gravity is lessened in water, making each stretch and exercise easier on the joints. If you experience pain during stretching or exercising, hydrotherapy takes the weight off your joints completely, which offers and effective and pain free option.