

## *Orthopaedic Connection*

### **“You Have Knee Arthritis” – Treatment**

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*Transforming patient information into patient understanding.*

#### **Where To Start**

This is where I ended the class last week as time expired.

#### **Weight Loss**

As aggravating as this topic is to most of my patients please keep reading. If you are serious about reducing your knee pain you should set a goal. Drop ten pounds. “That’s it, is he serious?”

Well, yes I am because numerous studies have shown that each one pound loss reduces the load on the knees by four pounds. I am not a Biomechanics Ph.D. so I can’t detail how this occurs, but it is absolutely true.

Set a goal and do it. You should notice less knee pain and when you do you will realize I do know what I am talking about. Getting over the hump and losing ten pounds will make you feel in control, powerful and if you are like most patients you will want to continue the program. When your knees are hurting less it is the knees’ way of saying thank you.

I have no connection to Weight Watchers, but I do know that if you have an organized program like that to support you, your chance of success quadruples. The program also helps you keep the weight off by educating you. I have seen this work over and over again.

What else? Well, this is a biggie. ***Weight loss lowers body wide inflammation that in itself contributes to joint damage and other related conditions.*** Are you saying, “Wow I didn’t know that”? It is true.

And losing any amount of weight makes it easier to exercise which is the next topic to cover to relieve pain from knee arthritis.

#### **Exercise**

Talking about exercise to most patients is about as popular as the subject of weight loss. But wait, don’t stop reading! It’s not that bad.

Exercise can help in 2 ways. It makes dropping pounds easier. It strengthens weak muscles that have resulted from the inactivity of arthritis.

I have a colleague who correctly says “Exercise Is Medicine”.

Engaging in a regular activity with some guidance builds strength and helps you reach and maintain ideal body weight. Both of these work in tandem to relieve knee arthritis pain.

Pool. If possible you might consider starting your exercise program in a pool. Then you will move on to walking, biking and resistance training.

Remember this all is a long term process and the best exercise program is one a patient will stick with.

#### **Outside Help**

A physical therapist, athletic trainer or exercise professional can be the difference in success or failure of your effort. A therapist will identify your weak spots, help improve balance and joint alignment and of course will work on strengthening your muscles. A physical therapist can also identify your need for orthoses or mechanical devices such as braces.

They will provide exercise that improves flexibility and strength in the hip, quads and hamstrings.

Your doctor can provide a referral for physical therapy. Most insurance plans will only cover a few visits, but that is OK because you have to be taught what to do correctly and then you have to continue the program at home.

### **The End**

Are there other things I have at my disposal to treat knee arthritis besides surgery? Yes, of course I do, but they treat the symptoms only.

*As I said in the beginning – Exercise and weight loss are the only 2 things that have been proven to positively affect the course of osteoarthritis of the knee according to the American College of Rheumatology and the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.* What are you waiting for? Good luck. You can do it!

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It contains a world of musculoskeletal information you and your family and friends can use! Website, Your Orthopaedic Connection, Archive of all previous GCH articles.

Please check it out. Be well.

Good health, good life, all the best to you.

Dr. Haverbush