

## Osteoarthritis

“Arthritis” is a term used to describe inflammation of the joints. Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common form of arthritis and usually is caused by the deterioration of a joint. Typically, the weight-bearing joints are affected, with the knee and the hip being the most common. OA affects daily activity and is the most common cause of disability in the US adult population.

The cause of OA is unknown. Current research points to aging as the main cause. Factors that may increase your risk for OA include:

- Age
- Genetics
- Past Injury
- Occupation
- Sports
- Obesity

Common symptoms include:

- Stiffness in the joint, especially in the morning, which eases in less than 30 minutes
- Stiffness in the joint after sitting or lying down for long periods
- Pain during activity that is relieved by rest
- Cracking, creaking, crunching, or other types of joint noise
- Pain when you press on the joint
- Increased bone growth around the joint that you may be able to feel

## HOW A PHYSICAL THERAPIST CAN HELP

Your physical therapist can effectively treat OA. Depending on how severe the OA is, physical therapy may help you avoid surgery. Although the symptoms and progression of OA are different for each person, starting an individualized exercise program and addressing risk factors can help relieve your symptoms and slow the condition’s advance.



An estimated  
**27 Million**  
Americans have some  
form of OA.

**1 in 2** people  
in the United States  
may develop knee OA  
by age 85