

# OSTEOARTHRITIS UNCOVERED

Understanding Risks, Diagnosis & Treatment Options



# Osteoarthritis doesn't have to mean giving up the activities you love.

If you've ever been told that joint pain and stiffness are just part of getting older — or that there's nothing you can do about it — it's time to rethink that.

Yes, osteoarthritis (OA) can make your knees ache, your hips feel stiff, and your movements a little slower.

**But here's the good news: there are plenty of ways to keep your joints happy and moving.**

Whether you're dealing with symptoms now or just want to stay ahead of the game, understanding OA and how to manage it can make all the difference.

We're here to show you how!



# What is Osteoarthritis?

Think of your joints like a **well-oiled machine** — they need smooth movement and cushioning to work properly. In healthy joints, cartilage covers the ends of bones, providing a shock-absorbing cushion that allows easy movement.

With OA, that cartilage becomes thin and fragile, leading to:

- ✓ **Joint pain** (especially during movement)
- ✓ **Stiffness** (more noticeable in the morning or after sitting)
- ✓ **Swelling** in some cases
- ✓ **Reduced range of motion** (making everyday tasks harder)
- ✓ **Clicking or grinding noises** (due to changes in the joint)

OA can affect any joint, but it's most common in the knees, hips, hands, and spine.

## How is it diagnosed?

A healthcare provider (physiotherapist, chiropractor, or doctor) will diagnose OA by assessing:

- **Your symptoms** (*pain, stiffness, mobility issues*)
- **Physical examination** (*joint movement, swelling, strength & stability*)
- **X-rays (sometimes)** – shows cartilage loss, bone changes, and joint space changes
- **MRI (rare)**

✦ **Important Note:** You **don't always need an X-ray** to be diagnosed! OA is often diagnosed **based on symptoms and a clinical exam.**

# Risk Factors

## RISK FACTORS YOU CAN'T CHANGE



- **Age**  
The risk of OA increases as you get older.
- **Sex**  
Women are more likely to develop OA, especially in the knees and hands.
- **Genetics**  
If your parents had OA, you may be more likely to develop it.

## RISK FACTORS YOU CAN CHANGE



- **Obesity**  
Extra weight puts more strain on your joints.
- **Inactivity**  
Joints stay healthy with movement! Too little activity weakens muscles and limits function.
- **Previous Injuries**  
A past joint injury, like an ACL tear, raises the risk of OA later.
- **Repeated Joint Stress**  
High-impact sports or demanding jobs without recovery can wear down joints faster.

# Treatment Options



Exercise helps strengthen muscles around the joint, reduces pain, and improves mobility.

- ✓ **Strength training** (builds joint support)
- ✓ **Low-impact cardio** (walking, cycling, swimming)
- ✓ **Mobility & stretching** (reduces stiffness)

💡 *Fun Fact: Many people think exercise makes OA worse—but the opposite is true! Regular movement is key to managing symptoms.*

Understanding **what OA is** and how to **manage symptoms** is key.

- ✓ Learn **how to modify activities** to reduce joint strain.
- ✓ Use **proper body mechanics** for daily movements.
- ✓ Stay consistent with your **exercise plan**.



Even a **small amount of weight loss** can **reduce pressure on the joints** and improve symptoms.

- ✓ Losing **10 lbs** can **reduce knee joint stress by 40 lbs** during movement!
- ✓ Combine **exercise + healthy eating** for the best results.

# Treatment Options



Some **medications may help manage pain** when needed:

- ✓ **Acetaminophen** (Tylenol) – May help mild pain.
- ✓ **Anti-inflammatories** (Advil, Motrin, Naproxen) – Reduce pain & inflammation (use with caution).
- ✓ **Topical creams** (Voltaren gel, capsaicin) – Provide targeted relief.

✦ *Talk to your healthcare provider before starting any medication, especially if you have other medical conditions.*

## ✓ **Physiotherapy & Chiropractic Care**

Improve joint mobility, flexibility, and strength through guided movement, manual therapy, and exercise.

## ✓ **Massage Therapy**

Helps relieve muscle tension and improve circulation around the joints.



## How It Works:

- Uses **high-intensity laser light** to **reduce pain, inflammation, and improve healing**.
- Shown to **increase circulation** and promote **tissue repair**.
- Can be useful for **knee, hip, and hand OA** as part of a full treatment plan.

✦ *Ask your physiotherapist or chiropractor if Class IV Laser is right for you!*

# Treatment Options



**Acupuncture**

- ✓ Shown to **help reduce pain and stiffness** in OA patients.
- ✓ May improve **blood flow** to affected joints and **release natural painkillers (endorphins)**.
- ✓ Often used alongside **exercise & manual therapy**.

- ✓ **Knee Bracing** – Provides **support and reduces joint pressure**.
- ✓ **Taping Techniques** – Helps **improve joint alignment** and movement patterns.
- ✓ **Custom Orthotics** – Supports proper foot positioning and **reduces impact on the knees and hips**.



**Taping, Bracing & Orthotics**

# Stay strong & active. You've got this!

Osteoarthritis doesn't have to slow you down! With movement, education, hands-on therapy, and lifestyle changes, you can ease pain and keep your joints strong.

## Want a personalized treatment plan?

Our physiotherapists, chiropractors, and massage therapists can help you find the right combination of treatments for your needs!

## Two Convenient Locations:

### Main Clinic

421 St. Clair Street  
Chatham, ON

### South Chatham

40 Beatty Street  
Chatham, ON

## Contact

 519-358-7342

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