



Why Motion is Lotion...and Rest is Rust! *By Prineet Tung, MD*

Your joints are designed to let you bend, twist and turn easily within certain limits. The ends of your bones are covered with a layer of cartilage to cushion the joints and help to spread out the pressure you put on them during daily movement. Surrounding the joint is a capsule that holds a thick liquid that lubricates the joint.

If you've ever felt a little creaky after sitting in the same position for more than two hours, you've tested your body's lubricating capabilities. The more you move, the more lubrication moves through your joints. Here are some simple ways to move more and keep your juices flowing while staying active:

Lubricate. Your joints' lubricating fluid allows your joints to move with more ease and less stress. To activate those juices, start your exercise routine with a gentle 5-10-minute warm-up and gradually increase your effort. Another good way to self-lube is drinking more water.

Stretch regularly. Daily exercise when coupled with regular stretching multiplies the effect on joints. Stretching opens blocked blood vessels and arteries to better blood flow, which leads to healthy joints. Stretching also removes

stiffness and makes you more flexible.

Strength training. Joints need protection. Your muscles, tendons and ligaments are designed to protect your joints. If they're weak, they can't do their job. A good way to build strength is through a training program designed by a physical therapist or personal coach, with your needs in mind.

Give a little TLC. Joints need tender care. Trying to lift too much weight, overtraining, too much repetitive action, or just doing too much, will put a strain on your joints. Learn to listen to your body. We need to keep moving while being mindful about how we move and never push past joint pain.

Cross-train. By cross-training — doing a mix of sports or activities you enjoy — you avoid the kind of single-sport repetitive motion that can cause joint problems over time. If you're not sure where to start, try gentle yoga. It's an excellent way to keep your joints strong and flexible.

Lose weight. The more weight you carry, the more stress to your joints. Every pound you lose equates to four pounds less pressure on your knees. Talk to your doctor about a good weight

reduction plan if needed. Eat fresh, whole foods prepared at home in modest amounts, include lots of fruits and vegetables, and less sugar.

Take a warm shower or bath. Warm water will ease pressure on joints and muscles. A nice warm bath can do wonders for alleviating joint pain in your knees and hips. Immerse the affected area in the water and massage it to stimulate blood flow.

Get your zzzz's. Giving your joints appropriate rest is good for maintaining their health. Are you getting about eight hours of sleep a night? During the day, it's okay to take a break to relax and alleviate stress on your joints. Adequate rest takes away muscle fatigue after workouts as well.

If you're experiencing joint pain or want to start an exercise program to prevent it, talk with your provider at your next visit!

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