

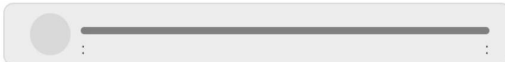
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Exercises To Help Decrease Joint Pain In The Winter

Joint pain tends to worsen in winter—but it doesn't have to stop you. Summit Orthopaedics shares low-impact exercises and warm-up tips to keep you moving comfortably all season.

General



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Have you ever gone for a walk in the wintertime and had to go home early because you were experiencing pain in your joints or muscles? This is extremely common, especially while aging.

Joint pain and arthritis are more likely to flare up during cold months because your joints are colder and stiffer, blood isn't circulating as efficiently, and it is hard to keep your muscles loose and limber while they are freezing cold.

While muscle and joint pain are incredibly prevalent during colder months, there is a lot you can do to help decrease this pain. There are exercises that you can do to help strengthen your muscles, and strengthening your muscles can reduce joint pain. You can also do other things to help keep your body warm while spending time outside, which will help you manage that awful ache in your joints.

You want to be able to spend time doing fun things with those you love, even when it is cold outside. Here are a couple things you can do to help decrease joint pain while you enjoy these wintery months.

What Causes Joint Pain?

There can be a lot of causes of joint pain: arthritis, age, overuse, cold, exhaustion, and so many others.

Everyone is different, so some people may experience more joint pain in specific joints than other people. This is totally normal. Before learning how to help decrease joint pain, though, it is important to understand a little bit more about what causes those joints to feel achy and sore.

The primary cause of joint pain is arthritis. Basically, arthritis is swelling within your joint and can result in your joints "grinding" together, almost like gears grinding in a car. That may sound dramatic, but it really does feel like that. Your joints become stiff, hard to move, and extremely sore.

Within your joints, you have bursa sacs that help decrease the rubbing of bone on bone. Most joints also have articular cartilage. This acts almost like a skating rink between your joints and provides a smooth surface for your bones to move over so your movements can be smooth and pain-free. When the bursa sacs or articular cartilage gets worn down, intense pain is often felt in those joints.

For a more in-depth look at joint pain and its causes, check out this awesome article that talks all about the [5 most common causes of joint pain](#).

Exercises You Can Do In The Winter



exercises you can do to help alleviate some of that pain.

First, it is important to state that you should listen to your own body before and while doing these exercises. If something causes more pain, inflammation, or tenderness, re-evaluate. If it gets really bad, contact your doctor. These are general recommendations and may not be suitable for you.

Also, it is vitally important to keep your joints warm during all of these activities—and any others that you do—especially in the wintertime. Warm joints move more smoothly and can drastically decrease your pain. When joints get cold, they get stiff and hard to move, which is extremely painful and common, especially during the cold months.

Low Impact Exercises

As discussed, joint pain is often caused by your bones rubbing against each other rather than gliding smoothly across cartilage. When you do high-impact exercises, these joints rub and hit each other more often, with more force. When doing exercises, no matter the season, it is best to try and avoid those high-impact movements.

For example, if you experience bad joint pain in your knees, running on cement is probably not the best option. Running causes severe strain on your knee joints because of the high impact of your feet on the cement. Instead, it may be better to try the elliptical, a bike, or even a rowing machine to try and limit the impact and strain placed on these joints.

Many options and ideas can help to limit high-impact activities. In fact, most activities can be slightly modified to help decrease the strain on your joints. Even simple things like doing step-ups rather than box jumps, side steps and not jumping jacks, and high knees rather than jumping, can prevent the added strain on your joints through low-impact exercises.

Finding these low-impact exercises can help you manage this pain a little more efficiently. Here are a couple more ideas of fun and winter-friendly, low-impact activities you can enjoy.

Yoga

Yoga is good for every single aspect of your life. It can help you strengthen your core, legs, arms, and every other muscle in your body. It also enables you to get in tune with your breathing which has many benefits. Additionally, it often can help ground you emotionally and even spiritually. On top of that, it improves flexibility. Basically, it can help you in every area of your life. Try it.

Yoga is also great because it can be so individualized. You can make it as hard or as simple as you want to. You get to cater your yoga to your body and make adjustments to help you. Joints are supported by muscles. It makes sense that if your muscles are weak or tight, your joints aren't going to work as well.

Yoga can help you strengthen these muscles while also encouraging flexibility. It is low impact and can be done year-round. Everyone should be spending 15 minutes a day stretching to help their muscles and joints, and yoga is a great (and FUN) way to do this.

Walking

Walking sounds like a simple answer, and it is. It is a good thing to do in the winter because it gets you outside, even if it is just for 20 minutes.

It also helps you use and strengthen your joints. You should make sure you are wearing good shoes and the right clothes, but going on a short walk every day can really help your joint pain. Not using your joints can actually increase your pain.

Walking helps keep your joints moving as smoothly as possible. When you go outside in the wintertime, it is important you dress accordingly to help keep your muscles and joints warm, as that will help decrease pain.

Biking

Biking may not be the most practical thing to do in the wintertime (especially in January in Idaho Falls), but there are plenty of indoor biking options. Biking is excellent because it is cardio and helps your blood pressure, heart rate, and overall heart and lung health.

It is also extremely low impact because your feet aren't slamming on the pavement (or treadmill) like with running.

Biking is one of the best exercises you can do for your overall joint and heart health. You can also take fun spin classes to help make this activity a little more enjoyable, especially when you can't go bike outside because of the lingering snow throughout the winter.

Cross Country Skiing

If you're looking for winter-friendly, joint activities, this is what you are looking for. Cross country skiing is a fantastic way to get outside to enjoy nature and the snow while also being kind to your joints. And honestly, so is snowshoeing.

These activities help you get outside while limiting the pressure and strain on your joints. Cross country skiing is different from downhill skiing (which is not nearly as joint-friendly). Cross country skiing and snowshoeing are often done on flatter terrains. They are a great workout because they get your blood pumping but don't cause excessive strain on your joints.



While the winter can be challenging, especially for those who suffer from arthritis and joint pain, it can also be beautiful and fun.

Knowing what to do to help manage your joint pain can help you enjoy your winter a lot more. It will allow you to do those things that you want to do.

These exercises are a great alternative to others because they are fun, low impact, and winter-friendly. If you have other questions about your joint pain, arthritis, or anything else regarding orthopedic surgery, give us a [call](#), we would love to answer them.

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