

Osteoarthritis of the hip

At **Allied Health Professionals Suffolk (AHPS)**, we're committed to helping you manage your health and stay active. This booklet is designed to provide clear, practical information about osteoarthritis of the hip - what it is, how it affects you, and most importantly, what you can do to manage your symptoms.

Inside, you'll find expert advice from our Physiotherapists on exercise, pain relief, and lifestyle changes to help keep you moving. Whether you're looking for ways to stay active or considering treatment options, we're here to support you every step of the way.

Let's take control of hip osteoarthritis together!

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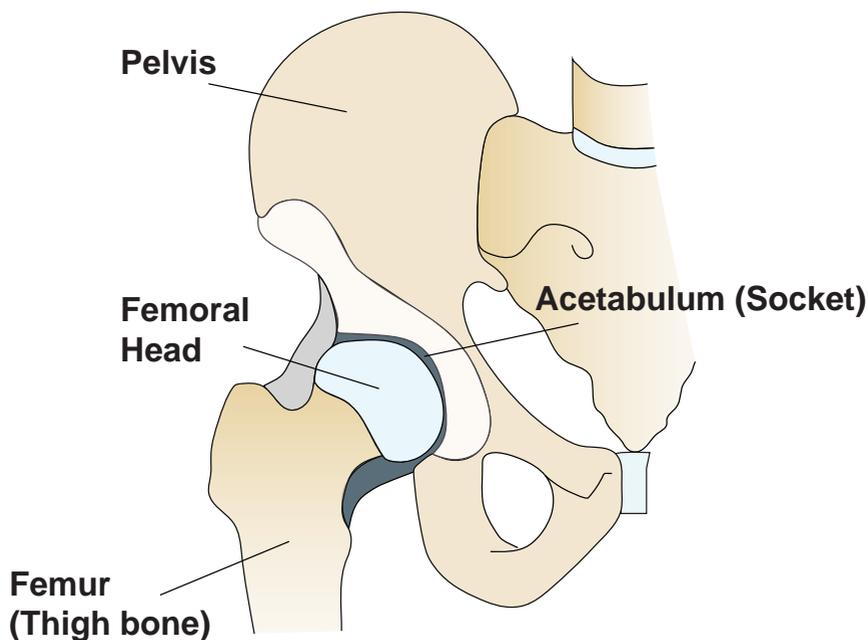
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What is osteoarthritis of the hip?

Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis, and the hip is the second most commonly affected joint.

The hip joint consists of a ball at the top of your thigh bone and a socket in your pelvis. The ends of these bones are covered with smooth, slippery cartilage, which helps them move easily and protects the joint from stress.



Osteoarthritis causes the cartilage in your hip joint to thin and the surfaces of the joint to become rougher, making movement less smooth and often painful and stiff.

It can affect anyone but is more common over the age of 50. Genetics and being overweight can increase your risk, as inflammation in the body may speed up its progression.

Do I need an X-ray?

X-rays aren't usually needed to diagnose osteoarthritis, as there isn't always a clear link between symptoms and changes seen on scans.

Some people have symptoms without visible changes on X-ray, while others show changes but have no symptoms. If your symptoms are severe enough to consider surgery, an X-ray will be arranged.



Case courtesy of Mohd Radhwan Bin Abidin, Radiopaedia.org, rID: 146648

How will it affect me?

Osteoarthritis tends to be a slow process over many years but in some cases it can progress much quicker or following an injury.

If you have osteoarthritis of your hip, you will probably feel pain in your groin and sometimes down the side of your leg and into your buttocks. You might have some stiffness in the morning, but this won't usually last more than half an hour.

You may find it more difficult and painful to bend down to put on shoes or socks, get off a low seat, get in and out of a car or go up and down stairs.

You may find your walking speed slows and you can't walk as far before the onset of pain. Sometimes, people have pain that wakes them up in the night. You'll probably find that the pain varies and that you have good and bad days.

Sometimes osteoarthritis of the hip can cause the muscles in the thighs and around your buttocks to weaken. The effects of osteoarthritis can make people feel depressed or anxious, and it can affect relationships and sleep. If you have any problems like this, mention them to your doctor as there are things they can do to help.





Suffolk Pathway for hip osteoarthritis

In Suffolk all patients with hip osteoarthritis are initially seen by a Physiotherapist at AHPS CIC. At your first appointment your Physiotherapist will ask you various questions about your symptoms and assess your hip joint.

The Physiotherapist will be able to increase your understanding of what osteoarthritis and discuss how this may affect you. As part of a shared process, they will discuss what your goals and expectations are and how best to proceed further.

Your next options may include continuing with exercises and following the advice of your Physiotherapist at home, coming in for further education or ESCAPE-pain classes with our rehab team or being referred on for a consultation with orthopaedics for consideration of a hip replacement.

If your symptoms are severe enough and surgery is indicated, an X-ray and possibly a blood test will be arranged to complete your referral.



Management of symptoms

There is no cure for osteoarthritis but there are things that you can do that can significantly reduce the pain and symptoms you are experiencing.

Exercise

It's very important to keep moving if you have osteoarthritis of the hip. Whatever your fitness level, exercise helps the hip to be able to cope with normal daily activities again.

You'll need to find the right balance between rest and exercise – most people with osteoarthritis find that too much activity increases their pain while too little makes their joints stiffen up. We want to try to find comfortable ways to keep your joint moving and keep you strong without increasing your symptoms.

This may include: swimming, cycling, strengthening exercises, Pilates or yoga. Your Physiotherapist can discuss what exercises might be beneficial to you based on your goals.

Nutrition

We know that carrying additional weight can cause increased stress onto these joints likely increasing the progression of osteoarthritic changes as well as increasing pain. Weight loss can have drastically beneficial effects on function and pain levels in those with osteoarthritis.

For many weight loss is hard, making sustainable change to habits and behaviours is typically the best way to encourage weight loss, you can be referred for additional support if this is indicated.



Other options

A walking stick or hiking poles can offload the hip and reduce the pain.

Using a heat pack on your hip may reduce the pain and stiffness. If this doesn't work you could try ice but please ensure you wrap an ice pack in a towel and leave on for no longer than 20 minutes.

Simple over the counter anti-inflammatories can help reduce some pain; your GP can prescribe stronger painkillers if this is indicated. Please discuss this with the Pharmacy or your GP.

Hyaluronic acid injections aren't currently available on the NHS as they haven't got a strong enough evidence based to prove their effectiveness but you may be able to get them privately.

Steroid injections are not offered for hip osteoarthritis.

Acupuncture – there is no strong evidence that acupuncture can help with osteoarthritis but some people find it can help manage the symptoms. This can be accessed privately.



Surgery

The options we have just discussed usually improve the symptoms, pain and ability to do daily activities in most people with osteoarthritis of the hip.

But if these treatments haven't worked for you, you may benefit from having surgery on your hip. Surgery might be suggested if your pain is very severe or if you have problems getting around or moving your hip.

The most common type of surgery for osteoarthritis of the hip is a hip replacement. This normally involves removing the top of the femur to replace it with a new small ball and a new socket in the pelvis.



Many hip replacements are performed each year all over the world and the operation can give a lot of pain relief and improve your quality of life.

Surgical techniques are improving all the time however, as with all surgery, there are some risks and your surgeon will want to make sure you're in the best health possible before the operation.

Your Physiotherapist will be able to discuss this with you and refer you on to your preferred hospital for consideration of surgery.



What are ESCAPE-pain Classes?

ESCAPE-pain (Enabling Self-management and Coping with Arthritic Pain using Exercise) is an evidence-based group rehabilitation program for chronic joint pain, specifically targeting knee and hip pain. These classes are delivered by trained professionals like Physiotherapists or Exercise instructors.

What to Expect:

Group Sessions: You'll join a small group (8-10 people) for a supportive learning environment.

Six-Week Program: There are 12 sessions in total, held twice a week for six weeks. If you miss more than 3 classes, you will not complete the course. Due to the program set up it is not possible to reschedule missed classes.

Combined Learning & Exercise: Each session includes an educational discussion to help you understand your pain and learn self-management strategies, followed by a supervised exercise program with activities tailored to your needs.

Focus on Self-Management: The main goal is to give you the tools to manage your pain independently, reduce reliance on medication, and improve your daily function.

Goal Setting & Progress Tracking: You'll set personal goals and complete questionnaires to track your progress.

Why ESCAPE-pain is Effective:

Evidence-Based: It's backed by strong research and clinical trials, showing significant reductions in pain and improved physical function.

NICE Recommended & CE Certified: ESCAPE-pain is recommended by NICE and is CE certified, ensuring it meets high healthcare standards.

Holistic Approach: It combines both education and exercise, helping you understand your condition and move more confidently.

Personalised & Supportive: Exercises are adapted to your individual needs, and participants consistently report positive experiences.



BMI

The meet criteria for an NHS funded joint replacement you need to have a BMI of 35 or under. Your BMI is a calculation of your height and weight, you can use the below link (or scan the QR Code) to check yours

<https://www.nhs.uk/health-assessment-tools/calculate-your-body-mass-index/calculate-bmi-for-adults>



If your BMI is greater than 35 we need to provide evidence of documented weight loss. In exceptional circumstances a special funding request can be put in through the local commissioning group.

Date	Weight

If you are being referred for surgery you may find documenting on the chart opposite is helpful to keep track of your appointments and tasks.

Is my BMI under 35?

Has the Physiotherapist checked my blood pressure and is it within the normal parameters?

Have I booked my blood test if required?

Have I had a recent X-ray of my hip?

Osteoarthritis of the hip

Osteoarthritis is the most common form of joint disease. In this booklet we explain what it is, how it develops and how it's treated. We also give some hints and tips on managing osteoarthritis of the hip in daily life

For more information please visit our website or scan the QR code here:

www.ahpsuffolk.co.uk

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Need more support?

If you need additional help, our physiotherapy team is here for you.

You can self-refer to our services through our website or call us on: **03330 433966**

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