

## Does Osteoarthritis in the Hip Joint Necessitate Surgery?



**M**ost people with osteoarthritis (OA) of the hip joint never need joint replacement surgery. Surgery only becomes an option if the person suffers from severe pain in the joint that is unrelieved by available treatment methods, with a dramatically impaired ability to perform daily activities and marked joint instability.

Simpler treatments to relieve pain, increase function and slow down the degeneration of the joint should always be tried before surgery is considered. One of the first things you can do on your own is to **control your weight**. Controlling your weight lessens pain by reducing stress on the hip joint.

Weight loss should be coupled with **physical activity**. By building up muscles around joints, exercise increases joint stability and prevents further damage. Even simple aerobic exercises like swimming and walking on level ground can be helpful. Set a goal of 30 minutes of daily exercise.

Range-of-motion, strengthening and stretching exercises can help relieve pain and improve joint movement. Other treatments to alleviate the pain of OA include heat and cold therapy; pain medication; transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS); acupuncture; therapeutic massage; yoga; nutritional supplements like glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate; stress control and cortisone injections into the joint.

Some people with OA of the hip are completely pain free, whereas for others, even minor movements of the joint can be quite painful. Because of this, it is important to follow an individually designed treatment program. What works for one person may not necessarily work for another, even if both have OA of the hip joint.

By treating OA early and following a treatment plan that we can design, you can reduce your symptoms, increase hip range of motion and lessen joint-damaging effects.