

## Exercise is good for wear and tear arthritis

Alex Chipperfield, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon at Benenden Hospital has welcomed the latest recommendations regarding exercise and arthritis published recently by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

This was following an article on the BBC News website about [exercise being good for joints with wear-and-tear arthritis](#).

Alex said: “As an Orthopaedic Surgeon who specialises in [hip and knee replacement](#), I see plenty of patients in my clinics every week who have wear and tear arthritis ([osteoarthritis](#)) affecting their joints.

“Patients often tell me that they have been physically active throughout their lives and many believe that their joints have worn out as a result of their sporting past.

“I also hear on a regular basis that people have been advised to rest painful worn-out joints as exercise can make things worse and wear their joints out even further.

“Neither of these statements are true and in fact I spend a lot of time trying to convince people of the huge benefits that regular exercise can provide, most to general health and also to arthritic joints.

“It was a relief therefore to see the latest recommendations regarding [exercise and arthritis published this week by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence \(NICE\)](#).

“In the guidelines, NICE says that regular exercise can help people stay supple, healthy and slim. It can reduce the need for strong painkillers and avoid unnecessary interventions.

“Osteoarthritis is a common condition affecting one in three people over 45 in England. Symptoms of pain, swelling and stiffness can vary from mild to severely debilitating.

“NICE now advise that physical activity, and non potent painkillers, be the first line of treatment.

“Regular exercise helps maintain a healthy body weight, a key factor in controlling pain. Strong muscles and supple ligaments around a failing joint can help to support the joint and alleviate some of the symptoms. Regular load bearing exercise helps stimulate and retain the remaining articular cartilage within a joint - the smooth surfaces that allow joints to glide rather than grate and grind.

“Although any exercise is better than none, the general advice regarding type of exercise suggests the following:

- Low impact exercises such as cycling, swimming and walking
- Flexibility exercises such as yoga and Pilates can help maintain strength and mobility
- Any exercise that gets your heart pumping is good for your general cardiovascular health
- Warm ups and cool downs are recommended

“In my clinics I see many people who really enjoy running. They enjoy the unique combination of physical fitness and mental wellbeing that running can bring. Many are devastated when they wrongly assume that the onset of arthritis will mean the end of their running lives. Again, the advice from NICE should reassure people that this will not be the case.

“Running, even with arthritis, can remain a viable option and continue to be hugely beneficial to a person’s general mental and physical wellbeing along with providing relief for painful joints.

A few modifications for runners are recommended by [Versus Arthritis](#):

### **Equipment**

Ensure that you have the correct footwear, cushioned and supportive. If you can I would advise contacting your local running store who will be able to analyse your running style and complement this with the best choice of trainers. Also remember that running shoes have a limited lifespan and should be changed every 500 miles or so.

### **Environment**

Choose your running surface wisely. A regular, flat cushioned surface (i.e. treadmill) will be less jarring for your joints than a hilly trail run on uneven ground.

### **Exercise**

Complement running with other core stability and strength exercises to vary the routine..

### **Eat**

Keep well fuelled and stay hydrated.

“As a person who has found running later in life, I can attest to the physical and mental benefits it provides, and hopefully this advice will reassure those with arthritis that they can continue to exercise, as the improvement for their general health and worn joints will demonstrate.”

To prove that he follows his own advice, Alex is running the London Marathon this year in support of the British Orthopaedic Association’s Joint Action Research Fund.

You can support his run via [www.justgiving.com/alexchipperfield](http://www.justgiving.com/alexchipperfield)

### **Considering private hip and knee replacement surgery?**

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### **Notes to Editor**

For further information or to arrange an interview with Jane Abbott, Hospital Director please contact Mirella Falcone, PR & Communications Manager at Benenden Hospital, on 07720 735934 or via [mirella.falcone@benenden.org.uk](mailto:mirella.falcone@benenden.org.uk)

Founded in 1907, Benenden Hospital is an independent hospital with charitable status, which continues the principle of providing first-class treatment for a wide range of specialities.

Rated as Outstanding by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the hospital offers a wide range of healthcare consultations, treatments and diagnostic services to Self-Pay patients, Benenden Health members and those with private health insurance. Some services may also be available to NHS patients via the e-referral system.