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Exercise is effective for osteoarthritis pain

In a recent Tools for Practice: for adults with knee or hip osteoarthritis, systematic reviews indicated that exercise can lead to ~30% pain improvement for 47% of patients versus 21% with no exercise at 6-104 weeks. The benefit was one additional person for every four treated.

The type of exercise does not significantly affect the results, however most trials included physiotherapy. The type of exercise was based on patient preference and accessibility and a similar efficacy was seen regardless of osteoarthritis severity.

Qualitative data suggests that people are confused about the cause of their pain and its variability and do not know what they can safely do. Providing reassurance and clear advice may encourage greater exercise participation.

Reference:

 Exercise for osteoarthritis pain: how strong is the evidence? Alberta Tools for Practice #255 (2020) View here

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