

## Fight knee pain with an active lifestyle



**D**id you know that the reason for pain, stiffness, locking and popping of joints, especially in the knees, can be more than just lethargy and bad posture? Doctors have been witnessing a steady rise in knee pain cases among both the young and elderly. While obesity, sedentary lifestyle, poor dietary habits are the primary factors, joint pain is also increasingly emerging as a post-Covid-19 complication. Although all knee pain may not necessarily indicate arthritis, early diagnosis is critical.

Inactivity is a major health threat, which is leading to a high disease burden and poor quality of life. According to a WHO report, every one in five adults and four out of five adolescents are physically inactive, which costs \$54 billion in direct healthcare. In the pre-Covid-19 era, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) study also noted that physical inactivity is common with 54.4% of Indians found inactive, highlighting that people spend more time at work in comparison to commuting and recreational physical activity.

### BAD LIFESTYLE — A CAUSE OF POOR BONE AND JOINT HEALTH

The muscles that support our

joints play a crucial role in keeping them healthy. Our biggest weight-bearing joint, the knee, takes our entire body load and stress while helping us to keep mobile. Although physical workouts and activities can strengthen its surrounding muscles, which aid in load-bearing, and increase joint flexibility, a bad lifestyle can do exactly the opposite.

**Dr Ishwar Bohra, senior consultant, joint replacement surgeon, BLK-Max Super Speciality Hospital, Delhi,** shares, "As we age, our body mechanism also slows down. Our bones and muscles gradually lose their ability to regrow and repair themselves. The knee joint has a soft tissue coating called cartilage and that, with muscle support, helps smoothen the range of motion and acts as a shock absorber. Over time, this soft tissue undergoes wear and tear that causes reduced joint space, resulting in direct friction between the thigh and shin bones. The degeneration of cartilage leads to arthritis followed by knee pain, swollen and warm joint, stiffness and abnormal gait." If overlooked, the pain can be debilitating, restrict movements and even cause disability. Seeking timely medical help is the key to better management of the condition.

**There is a steady rise in knee pain cases**

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### THE SOLUTIONS LIE WITHIN US

Osteoarthritis (OA) is primarily treated with pain medicines, exercise and physiotherapy. The more the disease progresses, the more evident the joint stiffness becomes. Stiffness can impair daily function and is commonly confined to the affected joint.

However, in chronic OA cases — where the initial course of treatment has failed to give long-term pain relief and has severely affected the quality of life in patients or even caused disability — total knee replacement (TKR) is the most feasible treatment option. In severe/chronic arthritis, where the condition becomes severe enough to affect one's mobility and quality of life, replacing the damaged joint helps relieve pain and restores smooth functioning of the joint.

"With the advent of technology, innovations such as a single radius knee technology, which mimics the natural knee that is circular and moves around the single radius, has revolutionised knee surgeries making way for efficient and effective solutions that may last for many years. It allows

more soft tissue preservation leading to natural knee motion support and early restoration of mobility and lesser physiotherapy sessions. While there are several knee designs available, your surgeon can recommend what's best suitable for you. It is important to understand that an implant placed inside the body must have undergone rigorous clinical trials and a long-term follow-up in a large number of people," Dr Bohra explains.

Post-TKR, an individual can resume normal activities within two months. A round knee allows stable and efficient movement while climbing or descending stairs, playing light sports, among others.

But as the saying goes, 'prevention is better than cure', therefore make it a point to work out for 30 minutes daily and practise simple forms of exercise to avoid knee problems.

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