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Arthritis affects 10 million people across the UK, and everyone's experience is different. Symptoms can fluctuate from day to day and impact daily life in various ways. Arthritis Research UK is encouraging people to contact them with their questions, no matter how big or small. Here they answer five common questions.

What can I do to manage my pain other than taking painkillers?

The pain of inflamed joints can be difficult to manage in arthritis. However, there are many things you can do to manage your pain alongside medication, including:

- Tailored exercise programmes- to strengthen muscles and build general fitness
- Heat or cold therapies
- Massage with or without cream
- Rest and good quality sleep

How does diet impact my arthritis symptoms?

Changing your diet probably won't have as great an impact on your arthritis as your medical treatments, and we don't recommend stopping any of your drug treatment without discussing it with your doctor first. But research has discovered several links between arthritis and diet, so it's still worth thinking about [what you eat](#) [5]. The two most important things to think about are:

- Losing weight if you are overweight - this will reduce the strain on your joints
- Making sure your diet is well balanced with vitamins and minerals

Can arthritis affect my mental health?

Research conducted for Arthritis Research UK found that a quarter of people with arthritis say they often or frequently feel “low or depressed” on account of their condition.

Do not feel worried or embarrassed about talking about the mental impact of arthritis with your doctor. The two are closely linked and they will understand the impact your condition can have. They will also discuss with you what support you may need to treat both the physical and mental impact of your condition side by side.

Is exercise beneficial for my arthritis?

Regular exercise will help to keep joints healthy, build strength and reduce the symptoms of arthritis for the millions of people in the UK who live with it. If you have joint pain, or difficulty moving, it can be difficult to start exercising. However, the advice is to exercise little and often: and starting off gradually is a good approach.

Arthritis Research UK have a range of [simple \[6\] exercises](#) that will help keep your joints moving. They have been specifically designed for those living with arthritis and joint pain.

What are the exciting areas of research in the arthritis field?

There's a lot to be excited about. Some things to watch out for include stem cell research to delay the need for joint replacements, the search for DNA markers for certain conditions and studies which are exploring how bacteria in the gut could trigger inflammatory arthritis.

Whatever your arthritis question is- be that about diet, exercise or pain management, Arthritis Research UK can help you find the answer.



Links

[1] <https://www.readersdigest.co.uk/health/health-conditions/five-things-you-should-ask-if-you-have-arthritis> [2] <https://helencowan.co.uk/..tags/bones> [3] <https://helencowan.co.uk/..tags/disability> [4] <https://helencowan.co.uk/..tags/exercise> [5] <https://www.arthritisresearchuk.org/arthritis-information/daily-life/diet-and-arthritis.aspx> [6] <https://www.arthritisresearchuk.org/arthritis-information/hints-and-tips/exercise.aspx>