

Weather Changes and Arthritis

Ever experience joint pain when the weather changes? Well, you are not alone. Many people have experienced increases in pain associated with arthritis when the weather changes or there are changes in the barometric pressure. And this can be a very common complaint during this time of year when the weather changes from day to day.

Many experts explain this increase in pain and stiffness due to changes in the fluid naturally found in your joints. With arthritis, the amount of fluid is increased within your joints. Colder weather can affect the fluid in your joints resulting in pain, stiffness and limited range of motion. The more sensitive you are to cold weather, the more pain you may experience as the temperature drops.

There are a few simple steps to take to help prevent pain and stiffness when the temperature plummets. **Keep warm.** Make sure you are wearing warm clothing and not exposing affected joints to the cold weather if possible. If you can't avoid the cold weather, gently move your joints to warm them up before doing any other activity. If you notice any pain with movements, make sure you stop. Also make sure to report any fatigue, decreased motion or increased pain to your doctor or therapist when doing any activity.

You can help prevent pain due to arthritis and weather changes by **exercising.** Exercise can help decrease your pain without hurting your joints. You can expect to accomplish the following goals with exercise:

1. Strengthen the muscles around the affected joint,
2. Maintain bone strength.
3. Improve your energy level to prevent fatigue,
4. Help control weight.

Most exercise programs will consist of range of motion, strengthening, and aerobic exercises. If you are not sure what is best for you, ask your doctor or physical therapist to help design an exercise program for you. With a proper program you can expect to experience decreased symptoms during the times of the year when the weather changes from day to day.

Exercising with Arthritis: Improve your joint pain and stiffness. by Mayo clinic staff. www.mayoclinic.com

Evening temperature fluctuations in arthritis sufferers. by K. Vaze. www.helium.com

The health information contained herein is provided for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace discussions with a healthcare provider. Decisions regarding patient care must be made with a healthcare provider, considering the unique characteristics of the patient.

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