

## Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis (OA) is a condition where surfaces within joints become damaged so the joint doesn't move as smoothly as it should. This can cause joint pain and stiffness and over the longer term cause joint damage. Older terms for OA are degenerative joint disease or 'wear and tear arthritis'. OA can affect any joint but commonly the knees, hips, hands, back, neck and feet.

When a joint develops osteoarthritis, some of the cartilage covering the ends of the bones gradually roughens and becomes thin, and the bone underneath thickens.

In severe osteoarthritis, the cartilage can become so thin that bones rub against each other and start to wear away. The loss of cartilage and the wearing of bone can change the shape of the joint, and results in joint damage.

The symptoms of OA are joint pain which is worse with activity and weight bearing and at the end of the day. Joints may grind or creak and may appear swollen due to bone thickening or thickening of the joint lining and extra fluid. Muscles may weaken or appear wasted and mobility or movements associated with affected joints may be impaired.

There is no cure for OA and the most important self care measures include remaining active and maintaining a healthy weight. Painkillers may be helpful to maximise activity but some patients will go on to need joint replacement surgery.

### Further information is available at:

**[www.sheffieldachesandpains.com](http://www.sheffieldachesandpains.com) (please refer to joint pain section)**

### **Arthritis Research UK:**

Web site:

<https://www.arthritisresearchuk.org/arthritis-information/conditions/osteoarthritis.aspx>

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