

Knee Firstsm

Many people with osteoarthritis (OA) of the knee believe exercise to be unadvisable because of their condition. In reality, moderate exercise can actually be beneficial to OA sufferers. Although there is no cure for OA (as with all degenerative diseases), successful treatment regimens can help shape attitudes and improve performance. The purpose of our restorative/rehabilitation program is to increase knee function and help patients gain control of their pain. At Bone & Joint Medical Center, we couple *viscosupplementation* with physical therapy to give our patients the greatest chance of conquering their osteoarthritis.

What is Viscosupplementation?

A viscosupplement is a substance that mimics the synovial fluid found in healthy joints. It is injected into osteoarthritic knees to reduce pain and improve function. Viscosupplementation is indicated for the treatment of pain in OA of the knee in patients who have failed to respond adequately to conservative nonpharmacologic therapy and simple analgesics (e.g. acetaminophen).

Viscosupplementation is an evidence-based treatment that has been found to successfully improve the lubricating properties of synovial fluid, reduce pain, improve mobility and provide a higher, more comfortable level of activity. There are many studies and reviews about treating OA with a viscosupplement. *The Cochran Collaboration* is a website dedicated to compiling clinical studies of healthcare interventions with valuable findings regarding viscosupplementation. For more information, visit www.cochrane.org.

Benefits of Physical Therapy

Rest is an important part of controlling osteoarthritis, but must be balanced with regular exercise. There are three main reasons for this:

1. Inactivity leads to decreases in functional abilities. This begins a vicious downward spiral of deconditioning sometimes referred to as sarcopenia (loss of muscle mass).
2. Joints become stiff when not moved through their normal range of motion. This creates obvious decrements in ability to function.
3. Strength training strengthens both muscles and connective tissue surrounding joints and cause movement to be less stressful, therefore reducing pain.



Physical therapy and exercise are often effective in reducing pain, improving joint mobility and improving function. Combined with viscosupplementation, physical therapy is an excellent way to successfully improve osteoarthritic conditions.