

# JOINT PROTECTION

## PREVENT JOINT DAMAGE & REDUCE RISK OF OSTEOARTHRITIS

### WHAT IS JOINT PROTECTION?

Joint protection means using your joints in ways that avoid excess stress. That might involve changing your surroundings or how you do activities.

### WHY IS JOINT PROTECTION IMPORTANT?

Joint protection is important to make sure that you do not cause harm to your joints. Accidents, injuries (traumatic or repetitive) or overuse of a particular joint can cause joint injuries. These injuries can cause pain and increase the odds that you may develop osteoarthritis in the future. Important parts of joint protection include muscle strength, good posture, moving around, and proper body mechanics.

### MUSCLE STRENGTH

Maintain muscle strength. Muscles help support joints. Keeping muscles strong may reduce the risk of wear and tear on joints and help prevent injury.

### GOOD POSTURE

When standing, imagine a line separating the front half of your body from the back. For good posture, your ear lobe, tip of your shoulder, side of your hip, knee and ankle should be in line with one another.

When sitting, your elbows, hips, knees and ankles should rest comfortably at 90-degree angles.

When working in a seated position, make sure the lower part of your spine is supported.

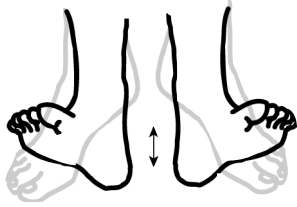
When resting, lie on your back with one pillow under your head and keep your arms and legs out straight.



## MOVE AROUND

One way to prevent joint damage is not stay in one position too long. Here are some tips:

- Use a stool for periodic rest breaks when standing.
- During periods of sitting, change the position of your legs.
- Every so often move the ankle joints by first pulling the toes toward the head, then pointing them down.



### WARNING SIGNS OF ARTHRITIS

- Joint Pain
- Swelling (sometimes)
- Stiffness in or around your joint
- Difficulty Moving a Joint

If you have any of these signs in or around a joint for more than two weeks, please visit your doctor.

## PROPER BODY MECHANICS

Proper body mechanics are very important when lifting objects. Here are tips on how to lift safely:

- Lift with a straight back and knees bent.
- Stay close to the object that is to be lifted.
- Keep your feet shoulder width apart for good base support.
- Avoid twisting at the waist.



**For more information contact:**

**Missouri Arthritis & Osteoporosis Program: 1-800-316-0935**  
**or**  
**Arthritis Foundation: 1-800-283-7800**

This publication may be provided in alternative formats such as Braille, large print or audiotape by contacting 1-800-316-0935. TDD users can access the above phone number by calling 1-800-735-2966.

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