



Osteoarthritis

"Osteo" means bone, "arthritis" means inflammation of a joint and is associated with degenerative changes in the articular cartilage. Osteoarthritis therefore involves a problem with the bone at the joint (such as the knee or hip). The cause of the osteoarthritis may or may not be known, but underlying factors include family history, excess body weight, previous injury or joint damage and abnormal body mechanics (movements).

Treatment includes modalities such as Interferential Current (IFC), and acupuncture, along with manual techniques such as traction. Exercises will be prescribed to strengthen the area and to maintain or increase the range of movement. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) or glucosamine supplements may be beneficial.

The therapeutic modalities commonly used include:

Ultrasound: uses sound waves and may be used to decrease scar tissue, increase blood flow, or decrease pain.

Interferential Current: uses electrical current to decrease pain, can also be used to elicit muscle contraction and decrease swelling.

Acupuncture: uses small, solid needles to encourage healing, reduce pain, and improve function of affected areas of the body.

What can you do at home?

Rest: by decreasing your activity you allow your body a chance to heal itself. When you start to feel better it is important to ease back into activities which might be aggravating. Listen to your body - pain means that you have done too much.

Ice: ice decreases the metabolism of your cells so that they do not die despite a decrease in oxygen to the injured area. Ice should be kept on for approximately 15 minutes, several times a day. The injured area should be elevated (above the level of your heart) at the same time. Use a wet towel between the ice and your skin to protect against frostbite. You can use frozen veggies, cold packs, or real ice.

