

JOINT HYPERMOBILITY



Joint hypermobility is common, especially in women and young adults. Hypermobility means that your joints move easily beyond the normal range of motion. Hypermobility can affect large or small joints, or both, for example knees, shoulders, elbows, wrists and fingers.

Sometimes hypermobility causes pain and stiffness in the joints and muscles, especially after exercise or a long, active day.

Treating hypermobility

Your physiotherapist will work with you to develop a custom exercise plan to:

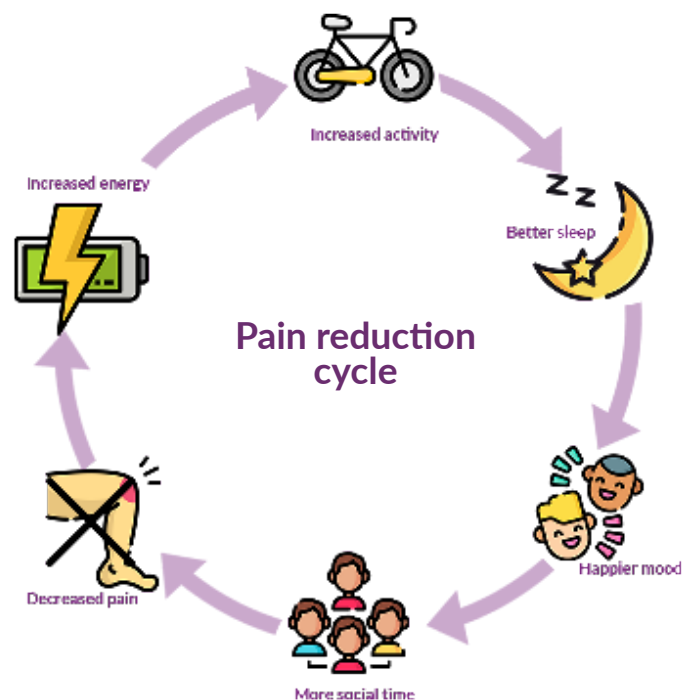
- build and maintain strong muscles so your joints are less likely to move out of place
- maintain alignment of the joints to make them less painful

Once you've developed a custom exercise program, you will need to continue the exercises for the rest of your life for maintenance. The fitter you are the better your joints will be.

Protecting your joints while being active

Gentle exercise has a lot of physical and emotional benefits and can help ease your pain and fatigue. Choose a low-impact, contact-free activity like walking, cross-country skiing, swimming, or elliptical training.

- Avoid overextending the joints, even though you can stretch further than other people. If you are participating in group activities look around to see what others are doing and try to avoid hyperextending
- Focus on proper form when you exercise.



Day-to-day tips

- Avoid spinal manipulations of the neck by a chiropractor or physiotherapist because they can increase risk of stroke, paralysis or death. Chiropractic manipulation of other joints will also make them looser.
- Keep good posture. Your ears, shoulders, hips and knees should all line up. When you're sitting at a computer, your arms should be bent at 90 degrees and your feet flat on the floor.
- Soften your knees. This means standing with a slight bend in the knee so the knee joint isn't locked in place. This will use your abdominal muscles and protect your back.
- Maintain a healthy weight as extra body weight makes your lower limbs and joints work harder, the same as carrying a heavy backpack or weights.
- Don't sleep on your stomach as this could cause hyperextension while sleeping. Sleep on your side or back and use supportive pillows to stabilize the joint and prevent you from rolling onto your stomach during the night.
- Hold your cellphone at eye level and take breaks from looking at the screen. Avoid bending your neck to look down and thrusting your chin forward.
- Move frequently throughout the day so you're not staying in one position. Try to avoid positions that over-stretch joints like sitting on your heels.
- Use a rug or gel mat in places where you might stand for a long time, like in front of the stove, sink or counter where you prepare food.
- Wear shoes with good soles and cushioned insoles, not flip-flops or high heels. Shoes should have appropriate arch support. Some people benefit from shoes or boots with ankle support. Replace shoes once cushioning is compressed or soles are worn.
- Avoid popping or cracking your joints as this can loosen the joints and lead to arthritis
- Use a thicker pen grip to avoid fatigue when writing. Typing might be easier than writing by hand. Some people may benefit from specialized splints or help from an occupational therapist to perform work-related tasks.



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