

# You don't have to live with the daily pain associated with arthritis



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*Interventional Pain Management Physicians Can Offer Relief for Arthritis Sufferers*

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For anyone who has lived with chronic arthritis pain, the concept that it can be reduced or even eliminated is often met with skepticism. People who have lived with pain for many years will claim to have tried everything – and many have.

However, with 21st century technology, and a growing medical field dedicated solely to the reduction of pain, the options are greater than ever. Interventional pain physicians have developed various procedures that have fully cured, or significantly reduced the pain and discomfort these individuals deal with on a daily basis.

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## Do



- be properly diagnosed
- consider the option of minimally invasive procedures
- understand the importance of location
- learn about RFA
- remember to exercise

## Don't



- become drug dependent
  - be afraid to repeat a procedure
  - stick to your old ways
  - assume arthritis is only for older people
  - forget the comforting rubs
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## **Do**

### **Do be properly diagnosed**

Proper diagnosis is the first, and most significant, step to treating arthritis. It is important to schedule a visit with the family physician or an interventional pain management physician to discuss symptoms. Degenerative arthritis is very common in seniors, but arthritis can also be found in younger individuals who have experienced a traumatic injury.

### **Do consider the option of minimally invasive procedures**

Typically, pain management physicians treat individuals who experience pain in their spine, whether it be related to the neck, the thoracic spine or the lower back. Minimally invasive injections can be administered to these joints to eliminate the pain. With the use of fluoroscopic guidance, the physician injects small quantities of a local anesthetic at the source of pain.

### **Do understand the importance of location**

Injections administered by an interventional pain specialist may provide instant relief, but they also provide valuable diagnostic information by evaluating the patient immediately after the procedure while the local anesthetic has its effect. If the patient feels immediate relief, then the physician knows he/she targeted the correct joints. After the injection, relief can be permanent or temporary.

### **Do learn about RFA**

Radiofrequency ablation (RFA) treatment is used to eliminate the pain fibers in individuals who experience arthritic pain in the spine. Using sophisticated technology, the physician harnesses radio frequency waves and directs them at the site of pain generating heat that eliminates the nerve endings sensing the pain, and providing nearly instantaneous relief with only minor discomfort.

### **Do remember to exercise**

Simple activities, such as exercise, can strengthen the muscular support around the joints, which can be very helpful for chronic arthritis sufferers. Swimming is well suited because it permits exercise with little stress to the joints.

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## Don't

### Do not become drug dependent

There are various medications that are recommended and patients who experience generalized arthritis pain all over the body should consult a rheumatologist. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID) and other medications have proven to be effective in both pain reduction as well as minimizing the inflammation in the joints, however they can have serious side effects.

### Do not be afraid to repeat a procedure

Relief from RFA, for example, can last forever. Sometimes, however, pain will recur when the pain fibers regenerate. In that case, the ablation process can be repeated. Following RFA, arthritis sufferers should attend physical therapy to condition the spine so when the fibers grow back they are tolerated and no longer painful.

### Do not stick to your old ways

Many doctors will suggest a change in diet, encouraging fruits and vegetables with critical vitamins and minerals, such as vitamin E that is high in antioxidants, or foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids. Weight loss also helps heavier arthritis patients, reducing pain in the legs and feet.

### Do not assume arthritis is only for older people

Degenerative arthritis is very common in seniors, but disregard the notion that it is strictly found in the aging population. Arthritis can also be found in younger individuals who have experienced a traumatic injury.

### Do not forget the comforting rubs

A good rub-down can help alleviate pain and certain creams applied topically may also be effective.

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## Summary



Pain sufferers of all ages can take heart that medical professionals all over the world are looking to find ways to reduce and even eradicate pain. The concept of interventional pain care – tackling pain from the site of origin – has seen a rise in the past ten years. Arthritis sufferers should not have to live with daily pain.

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