



Zoe Birch is a Chartered Physiotherapist and founder of PhysioMotion, which operate three London clinics as well as providing physiotherapy at home. In her latest article for **SEBRA NEWS W2**, Zoe discusses common misconceptions about a condition that is becoming more widespread.

OSTEOARTHRITIS MYTHS

A lot of my older patients have often given up activities, such as tennis and running, that they enjoyed and they thought they were too old and that it would cause arthritis.

In February 2019, Gutsell and Plonka published a paper that researched people aged between 50-70 years old who either lived a sedentary life or ran regularly throughout their life to show how much arthritic changes they had on X-ray. They were shocked, as the group of runners had less arthritic changes in the joints compared to the sedentary group, demonstrating that moderate amount of high impact through the body is good for you.

So dust off your running shoes and dig out your tennis rackets!

3. I must have a joint replacement due to having arthritis

There is a scale for the degree of arthritic changes that have happened in your joint: 0 being no changes and 4 being severe changes. Therefore just because you have arthritic changes in your joint doesn't necessarily mean that you need to have a joint replacement.

I only advise my patients to have a hip or knee replacement under the following circumstances:

- **Even with adhering religiously to a physiotherapy exercise programme, they still are unable to regain full range of movement in their joints.**
- **Due to severe joint changes, they are weight bearing predominantly on one area of the joint which can be visibly seen without X-ray.**
- **Their walking is deteriorating even after adhering to a physiotherapy exercise programme.**

Most arthritic changes are normal and can be managed with exercise and diet.

4. Grinding in my joints is causing arthritis

Our joints can click, grind, snap crackle and pop. But does it mean there is something wrong?

No! We don't fully understand what causes these noises in our joints. From personal experience my toes click on



Joint degredation is perfectly normal part of the ageing process.

every step which doesn't stop me doing anything, but my career as a Ninja came to an abrupt end!

In the medical world, if you have a noisy joint that is pain free there is normally nothing to worry about and you probably have had it all the time.

A quote I use often with my patients is 'a noisy joint is like a child playing a recorder, sounds awful but completely harmless'.

In conclusion what we do know about arthritis is it loves the joint to move, needs strong muscles around it and is absolutely normal in all of us.

References

1. Ward, C. (2009). *History of self-experimentation in orthopaedics. The Iowa orthopaedic journal*, 29, 127-129.
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PhysioMotion Ltd

17a Old Court Place
Kensington
W8 4PL

www.physiomotionlimited.co.uk
020 3422 6655

With the population living longer, I often hear that any ache or pain must be due to arthritis in their joints.

Typically they are referring to osteoarthritis which is medically categorised as degeneration of the joint surface. This literally means that the bone surface is changing. This is absolutely normal and will happen to all of us.

HERE ARE FOUR MYTHS ABOUT OSTEOARTHRITIS:

1. My pain is caused by bone on bone rubbing!

This has been suggested that the reduction in cartilage and changes in the bone's shape is causing the pain in your knee.

A surgeon called Dr Scott F Dye had keyhole surgery on his knee performed under no aesthetic, so that he could understand and research where his knee pain was coming from.

With a probe, pressure was applied to the joint surface and he was surprised that no pain was experienced. Then it was performed on the surrounding soft tissue and he had a pain response.

Therefore the joint surface changes have very little impact on the pain we are receiving and that it is the soft tissues around that joint that are inflamed. Thus, exercise therapy is the most effective way of treating and managing arthritis.

2. High impact activities such as running cause arthritis quicker

Exercise is good for your joints. It keeps them moving, strong and stimulates the body to keep them healthy. But how much impact is good for them?