

## Lower Limb Joints

Are they protected for pain free healthy living for life?



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Physical activities at any age is vital for healthy and pain free living, and for independent aging. However, over one's life, the complex structure of lower limb and its joints are used and abused receiving trauma day after day as it serves to:

- Support self body weight
- Act as a shock absorber
- Serve as a lever to propel the leg forward, backward, & bend, etc.
- Help maintain balance by adjusting the body to uneven surfaces

As we get old we wonder why we can't move. The lower limbs are adapted for stability through its joints. Therefore, the alignment of these joints are very important to avoid damaging pressure during our life span, as they are vulnerable to acute injuries and development of early age osteoarthritis.

Ankle Joint is a region where the foot and the leg meet. It works on a complex hinged mechanism, composed of three bones, bound by the strong ligaments and tendons that make an important contribution to the stability of the ankle and body. Knee Joint is the largest and most complicated hinged joint in our body, a union between thigh and lower leg comprising of three bones, various ligaments, tendons, cartilage and bursa. These joints along with the muscles, ligaments, tendons and soft tissues of lower leg, works together to provide strength and stability to handle the stress, trauma and impact they receives through out your life as you walk, run, jump, bend, straighten, twist and turn.

As these joints are most mobile and flexible in our body, they are more vulnerable to injury, instability and degeneration. Therefore it is Important to:

- Maintain healthy weight, as every extra kilo of fat put additional strain on the joint.
- Prepare and maintain muscles strength and flexibility around the joints to meet the demand of your physical and sports specific activities.
- Keep these joints well aligned, strong and flexible at all times and protected during all load bearing activities such as working around the house, competitive sports, gym workouts during strength or cardio.
- Wear appropriate brace to provide additional support whenever the joints are challenged beyond normal movement to prevent injuries and early degeneration.

Ankle and/or Knee pain is the most common reason to slow down your physical activity. They both have wide variety of specific causes, symptoms and treatments. In case if these joints are strained or injured, where swelling, pain, redness and warmth occur, it is advisable to:

- Initially consider RICE, i.e. Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation.
- Compress the joint with appropriate level clinical braces, that helps reduce swelling and keep the joint aligned, intact and off load body weight from the joint.
- Undergo rehabilitation and subsequently functional therapy intervention
- Continue prescribed self-care exercise program
- If the symptoms persist consult your doctor.

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