

Orthopaedic Connection

Coping with Knee Arthritis Twelve Commandments

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

Dr. Haverbush's Twelve Commandments for managing your knee arthritis are not very technical. They are very practical as you will see.

Some will say "I knew that," but I have not come across anyone who routinely does all 12. Some are do's and some are don'ts. All of them can help. Wouldn't it be great if they reduced pain enough that you could cut way back on pain pills.

Ready, lets go!

1. Do Not Kneel

Don't worry, I'll talk to your priest or minister if necessary. Seriously, kneeling at home, work or church is a knee killer. Pressure is concentrated on the front of the knee where there is lots of arthritis under the knee cap. Avoid kneeling if at all possible.

2. Don't Carry Heavy Things

Every extra pound you lift or carry increases stress on your arthritic knees. Ouch! Get help. That's what family and friends are for aren't they? They should be glad to help you.

3. Don't Stand For Long Periods

Too much stress builds up in your knees when you stand for long periods (hours). You may not feel it exactly at that moment, but you will feel it later. A good rule is one hour at a time. Then sit for 5 - 10 minutes.

4. Use Both Hands to Support Yourself

When getting up from a seated position, use your hands and arms if possible to push down and help lift yourself. This decreases stress on a bent knee, reduces pain and further damage.

5. Do Use The Elevator. Avoid Stairs.

Stair steps add strain to arthritic knees. Always use the elevator even for just one floor.

6. Avoid Uneven Ground

Uneven ground even if grassy, stones, and uneven bricks are bad for knees. A firm surface like a sidewalk is your knees best friend.

7. Ride A Bike

Cycling puts less stress on knees than walking. Use a lower gear and adjust the seat higher as it helps your kneecaps. A bike is not a weight bearing exercise so it doesn't build bone like walking. So there is a trade off.

8. Handrails Help

If there is no elevator you can decrease knee strain by using a hand rail on the stairs and going slowly.

9. Don't Use Low Chairs

Your knees want you to use a comfortable, higher chair with armrests. Low chairs or sofas cause too much strain when standing up.

10. Do Stretch Your Legs

When sitting move your legs and change position often. Don't fold your legs under your chair. Your kneecaps won't like you.

11. Avoid Walking Up or Downhill

If possible don't go up or down inclines or hills. Why? Flat terrain doesn't stress your knee arthritis like an incline does. Flat = good. Incline = bad.

12. Shoe Wear

Forget shoes. Everyone should wear flip flops. They are cheaper and easier to put on and off. Did I get your attention? Good. Just kidding! Let's start over, O.K.

- Avoid heels that are too hard. Fairly low heels are best.
- Wear lace up or velcro shoes with soft heels.
- Wear soft heel cushions in your shoes.
- A good athletic shoe is best.
- Avoid sandals or flat shoes that give no support.

Well, there you have it. Dr. Haverbush's Twelve Commandments, two more that Moses brought back. Have a good week.

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website, Your Orthopaedic Connection and the Archive of all past Gratiot County Herald articles I have written for you. It covers all the problems I treat in the office and hospital.

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free, functional lives. I specialize in you.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush