As an Orthopaedic Surgeon I know that women are more affected by arthritis than men. So far research has not clearly demonstrated the reason for this gender based disparity. An article pertaining to this had been written in the past, but the reason for the difference is still not known.

Possible Reasons

- Estrogen limits the damaging effects of inflammation on joint cartilage. Women lose this protection at menopause. In men testosterone also protects bone strength and cartilage and it declines much slower than estrogen does in menopause.
- Women have more lax joints than men. A lack of joint stability can contribute to the development of arthritis.
- Women, being smaller than men, have less thickness of articular cartilage to protect their joints.
- Any joint injury in the past can increase the possibility of arthritis at a later time.
- The angle of a woman’s knee where the femur meets the tibia is greater in women than in men which may explain why there are more ACL injuries in women.
- Decreased muscle strength in women may be a factor.
- Excessive weight in men and women places added stress on ligaments and pressure on the joint’s articular cartilage.
- Adipose cells produce inflammatory substances that are damaging to chondrocytes, which build and maintain cartilage.
- Women have a higher fat mass relative to muscle mass than men do.

What Can Be Done

Describing the problem is the easy part. Doing something about it is far more difficult.

- Daily walking is fine, but it doesn’t do a lot for muscle mass.
- A person needs to focus on strength training in addition to walking.
- Muscle mass is increased through strength training 20 minutes, 3 time per week. You’ll need a “strength coach” who knows about this to get you started right. Not many are willing to do this, however.
- Maintain optimal weight. See what I mean by this being the hard part!
- Depression if present seems to not allow any of the above to work and is very prevalent in many patients.
- If one type of anti-inflammatory medication doesn’t work don’t give up because some medications are more effective in different people.

Awareness

Orthopaedic Surgeons can fix countless injuries, fractures and arthritis problems in many patients.
As part of my work I have to make you aware of what you can do. There is one thing for sure. Doing nothing is almost a guarantee you are headed for a place you won’t like. It will only become worse over time. Delay is not your friend.

*My patients put their trust in me and what I do improves the quality of their lives.*

**Gratiot County Herald Archive and Office Website.**

I sincerely appreciate all of you loyal readers and patients present and future and welcome all newcomers!

Besides what you read today there is a huge treasure trove of Orthopaedic and musculoskeletal information at [www.orthopodsurgeon.com](http://www.orthopodsurgeon.com). It contains the Website Library, Your Orthopaedic Connection and complete archive of every GCH article I have written.

I specialize in you. Be well.

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