



## TAYLOR TIDBITS

### OSTEOARTHRITIS

Osteoarthritis is one of the most common injuries affecting people across the world. The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons suggests that 26.9 million adults have clinical osteoarthritis in at least one joint.

What is osteoarthritis? Osteoarthritis is the breakdown of the articular hyaline cartilage at the end of bones. This cartilage either has no blood supply or very poor blood supply. Meaning, that once this cartilage is injured it will not heal. The cartilage at the end of bones serves as a cushion and helps to reduce friction in the joints. Once the cartilage has deteriorated from either an injury or normal “wear and tear”, it exposes the underlying bone surface. This eventually causes the “bone on bone” phenomenon that is familiar to most people. The underlying bone, consisting of hundreds of nerve endings, is stimulated resulting in pain. The surfaces of the knee also become irregular, instead of smooth. The irregular surface and loose cartilage in the knee can cause a catching or locking sensation, a person may have warmth, stiffness, and swelling. These symptoms lead to inactivity, which cause muscle weakness and possible weight gain. Osteoarthritis is most common injury in the weight bearing joints of the body. These joints include the spine, hip, and knees. It may also be found in the neck, fingers, thumb, and big toe.

Osteoarthritis is worsened or caused by several things. These include, but are not limited to, obesity, injury, misalignment of joint, overuse, genetics, age and muscle weakness.

Multiple treatment options are available to people who suffer from the symptoms of osteoarthritis. One common treatment option is physical therapy. With physical therapy, a person begins to strengthen the surrounding muscles of the joint, improve flexibility in the joints, decrease pain, decrease effects of inactivity, such as weight gain or obesity, and improve functional ability, such as walking and climbing stairs. To attend physical therapy, a person must visit their doctor and receive a written prescription for therapy, if the physician feels it is appropriate. Physical therapy is not the only treatment method. Other treatment options include medication, wearing corrective braces, weight loss, lubrication injections, steroid injections, and surgery.

Please feel free to contact Taylor Rehabilitation and Wellness Center at 478-783-3474 with any questions. We would love to fill your therapy needs.

Article by: Andrew Whiggum, PT, DPT  
Taylor Rehabilitation & Wellness Center