



# Hip Arthritis – tips and exercises

**Hip arthritis** is a breakdown of the cartilage that cushions your hip joints. Many people develop arthritis in their hips as they age.

## What will you feel?

You may feel aching, pain and stiffness. These symptoms can be felt in the front and side of the hip, the buttocks, groin, and occasionally the knee. Symptoms are usually worse in the morning, after long periods of not moving or after prolonged activities. Symptoms can vary from day to day.

**You may have difficulty;** walking, squatting, climbing stairs, crossing your legs, getting in and out of the car or putting your shoes and socks on.

## What should you do?

**Move your hip often:** Arthritic joints feel better with gentle movements and worse with long periods of not moving. If you have been sitting for a while, move your leg(s) out to the side and back several times before you get up. If you have been standing for a while, hold onto a table and swing your leg gently in circles.

**Maintain ideal body weight:** Being overweight puts extra strain on your hips.

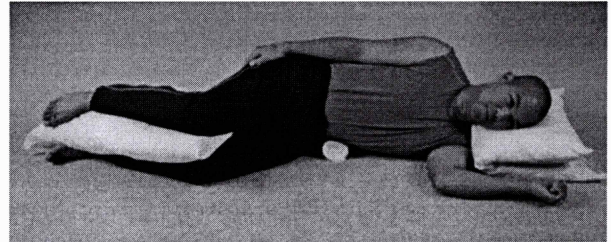
**Walking aid:** Walking with a limp can put extra strain on your body.

- Use a cane, walking stick or walker to help you walk with less pain and without a limp.

**Supportive shoes:** Good cushioning and arch support can make standing and walking more comfortable. Avoid high heels and non-supportive shoes.

**Sitting:** Sit in a chair that allows you to have your hips higher than your knees. Scoot to the edge of the chair before you stand. Use the arm rest, if available, to help push yourself up. Avoid sitting in low chairs, soft couches or a low toilet. This is stressful on your hips and makes it difficult to get up. It may also be helpful to get a raised toilet seat.

**Sleep:** Use a pillow between your legs when you sleep on your side or under your knees when you sleep on your back.



**Heat or cold:** Place heat or cold packs on your hips for 10-15 minutes as needed to help manage your pain. Place a thin layer of cloth between the ice or heat and your skin. You can alternate back and forth between heat and cold.

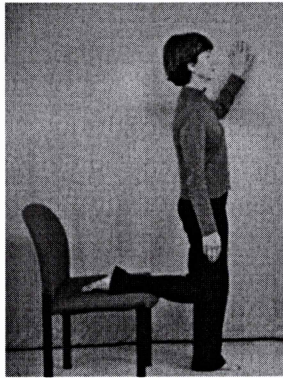
**Exercise:** Exercise can help you maintain your range of motion, decrease your pain and maintain your activity level.

**Aerobic exercise:** It is important to continue with regular aerobic exercise. Aerobic exercise like riding a bike, using a pedal exerciser, swimming or water exercises are good forms of exercise for your hip. Make a goal of 30 minutes of aerobic exercise per day. Stop if the exercise is causing more pain.

**Stretching:** These exercises will help maintain range of motion in your hip and flexibility in your hip muscles.

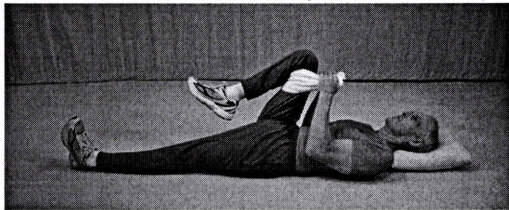
### Front of thigh stretch

Stand next to a wall or counter for balance. Place your foot on a chair behind you. Gently tighten your buttocks and feel the stretch on the front of the thigh. Hold 30-60 seconds, repeat 2-4 times per day.



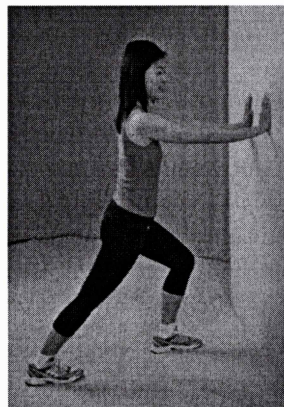
### Back of hip stretch

Lie on your back. With both hands, pull your knee toward your chest until you feel a gentle stretch in your buttock. You can use a towel as pictured to help you with the stretch. If you have pain you can angle your knee out to the side or do not pull into the pain. Tighten your stomach muscles and then slowly let your leg back down. You can bend the opposite knee for comfort. Hold for 30-60 seconds, repeat 2-4 times per day.



### Calf stretch

(A) Place the leg you are stretching behind you. Keep your heel on the ground, knee straight and your toes pointed straight ahead. Lean forward until you feel a gentle stretch in your calf. Hold 30-60 seconds, repeat 2-4 times per day.

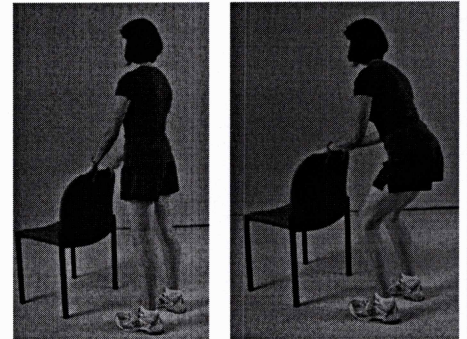


*Consult with your physical therapist or doctor if you experience an increase in your symptoms with recommended exercises, or if you develop new symptoms of numbness, tingling, or a spread of the pain. This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor. If you have questions or need more information about your medication, please speak to your pharmacist. Kaiser Permanente does not endorse the medications or products mentioned. Any trade names listed are for easy identification only.*

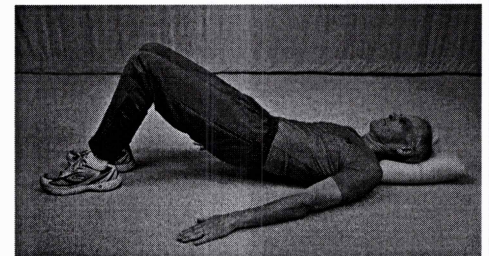
## Physical Therapy

**Strengthening:** These exercises will help you maintain strength in your hips.

**Mini squat using a chair:** Hold onto the back of the chair with your feet shoulder width apart. Slowly bend your knees and squat down just a few inches. Make sure you do not go low enough to increase your pain. Keep your knees over your feet. Hold for 5-10 seconds then return to starting position. Repeat 10 times, 2-4 times per day.



**Bridging:** Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Gently tighten your stomach and buttock muscles. Lift your hips 3-5 inches from the floor without arching your back. Hold bridge for 5-10 seconds, and then slowly lower your hips to the floor. Repeat 10 times, 2-4 times per day.



**Basic clam:** Lie on your side with both knees bent and positioned in front of you. Gently tighten your abdominal muscles to protect your back. Slowly raise your top knee up and outward like a clam opening while keeping your feet together. Keep your buttock muscles tight throughout the exercise. Hold for 5 seconds then slowly lower your knee back to the starting position. Do not roll your body or pelvis backward. Repeat 10 times, 2-4 times per day.

