

## FAST FIVE

### Tips to prevent osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis is a disease that occurs when the cartilage (the soft tissue that cushions your joints) breaks down and leads to pain, swelling, stiffness, and decreased range of motion.

More than 32 million adults in the United States are affected by osteoarthritis. Reduce your risk of developing it with these tips from James Willey, a Kettering Health physician assistant and orthopedic advanced practice provider:

- 1 Maintain a healthy weight.
- 2 Participate in non-weight-bearing exercise.
- 3 Avoid contact sports and repetitive actions.
- 4 Seek medical treatment for pain that lasts longer than three weeks.
- 5 Partner with a primary care provider. Regular well-visits keep you at your healthiest.



### STAY WELL

One of the best ways to prevent future injury and disease is to invest in your health today. To find a primary care provider, visit [ketteringhealth.org/primarycare](https://ketteringhealth.org/primarycare) or call 1-888-981-9456.



### FACT OR FICTION

### Can cracking your knuckles cause arthritis?

We asked James Willey, MPAS, PA-C, whether “cracking” joints is merely a bad habit or if it poses more serious health risks.

**Q: What happens when I “crack” a joint?**

**A:** The “popping” or “cracking” sound that happens when you crack your knuckles or other joints is caused by gas bubbles in your synovial fluid.

**Q: Can cracking my knuckles, back, wrists, neck, or other joints cause arthritis?**

**A:** It doesn’t appear that cracking your knuckles or wrists can cause arthritis. However, cracking your neck may lead to inflammation around nerve roots and lead to long-term issues. Cracking your back habitually may cause instability at the segmental level and lead to arthritis over time.

**Q: Is it safe to crack my joints, or should I avoid it? What are some healthier ways to find relief from “tight” joints?**

**A:** Cracking your knuckles is not a healthy behavior, but occasionally cracking your knuckles or joints is generally not a major health threat. The problem arises when this type of behavior becomes habitual or obsessive. Other ways to find relief from tight joints include stretching, yoga, Pilates, physical and occupational therapy, and massage therapy.