



THE OSTEOARTHRITIS STARTER GUIDE

Practical tips you can start today!

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G E N U I N E P H Y S I O



AN EVIDENCED-BASED APPROACH

This guide is grounded in current clinical guidelines and research into osteoarthritis management.

It focuses on what genuinely makes a difference — not trends, fear-based narratives, or outdated advice.

You may find that some of this challenges things you've previously been told about arthritis. That's okay.

Everything inside is built around one principle:
Start with what works.

While your symptoms are personal, the core principles that improve osteoarthritis are consistent.

Once those foundations are in place, your approach can be adjusted and refined to suit you.



LUKE SCHEMBRI

FOUNDER OF GENUINE PHYSIO

I am Luke Schembri, an Advanced Physiotherapist and founder of Genuine Physio.

I work at an advanced clinical level across the full musculoskeletal pathway, from rehabilitation and progressive strength training, through to imaging decisions, injection therapy and surgical referral when necessary.

I regularly collaborate with local orthopaedic consultants and medical colleagues, which allows me to see the complete picture of osteoarthritis management.

That means I am not limited to one approach.

If conservative treatment is appropriate, it should be structured and progressed properly. If further investigation or intervention is needed, that decision should be based on clear reasoning.

My aim is simple.
To help you make informed decisions and manage osteoarthritis with confidence, not fear.

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CHAPTER 1

UNDERSTANDING OSTEOARTHRITIS

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UNDERSTANDING OSTEOARTHRITIS

Osteoarthritis is a common, age-related process that affects the structures within a joint, including cartilage, bone and surrounding tissues.

It is extremely common, particularly after the age of 50.

Importantly, joint change and pain are not the same thing.

Many people have visible osteoarthritic changes on scans and little to no pain. Others experience pain with relatively minor structural change.

Pain is influenced by multiple factors, including strength, movement, sleep, stress, inflammation and overall health.

This is why osteoarthritis is not simply “wear and tear”.

Joints and surrounding tissues respond to load over time. Avoiding movement can reduce strength and capacity, whereas, appropriate, progressive loading can improve both.

Osteoarthritis is not a sentence to decline.

It is a condition that responds to the right approach.

Understanding that your joints are adaptable is step one. In Chapter 5 of the [Ultimate Osteoarthritis Guide](#), we take this further by identifying the specific mental barriers and beliefs that often hold people back from recovery, giving you the mindset needed for long-term success.



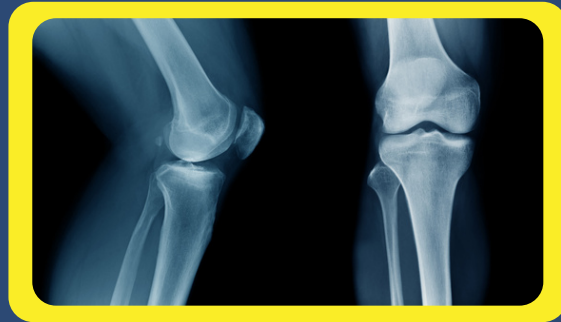


CHAPTER 2

DO YOU NEED A
SCAN?

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DO YOU NEED A SCAN?



In most cases, osteoarthritis is a clinical diagnosis. This means it is diagnosed based on your symptoms and physical examination, not purely on imaging.

X-rays and MRI scans can be useful in certain situations, but they are not routinely required to confirm osteoarthritis. There are several reasons for this:

First, scan findings often do not match pain levels. Many people have visible osteoarthritic changes and little to no pain, while others experience pain with relatively minor structural change.

Second, most people over the age of 40 will show some degree of joint change on imaging. These findings are common and often represent normal age-related changes.

Third, imaging rarely changes the initial management plan. The first-line approach remains education, exercise and lifestyle modification.

Scans are appropriate if symptoms are rapidly worsening, if there are red flags, or if inflammatory arthritis or another condition is suspected.

For the majority of people, treatment begins conservatively, with a clear and structured approach.

If a scan doesn't explain your pain, what does? In Chapter 3 of [The Ultimate Osteoarthritis Guide](#), we look at how pain actually works and how you can take back control of your symptoms



3

CHAPTER

WHAT ACTUALLY WORKS

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WHAT ACTUALLY WORKS?

When it comes to osteoarthritis, not all treatments carry the same weight.

Some approaches are strongly supported by evidence, while others may offer temporary relief but should not replace the fundamentals.

The strongest evidence consistently supports three key foundations:

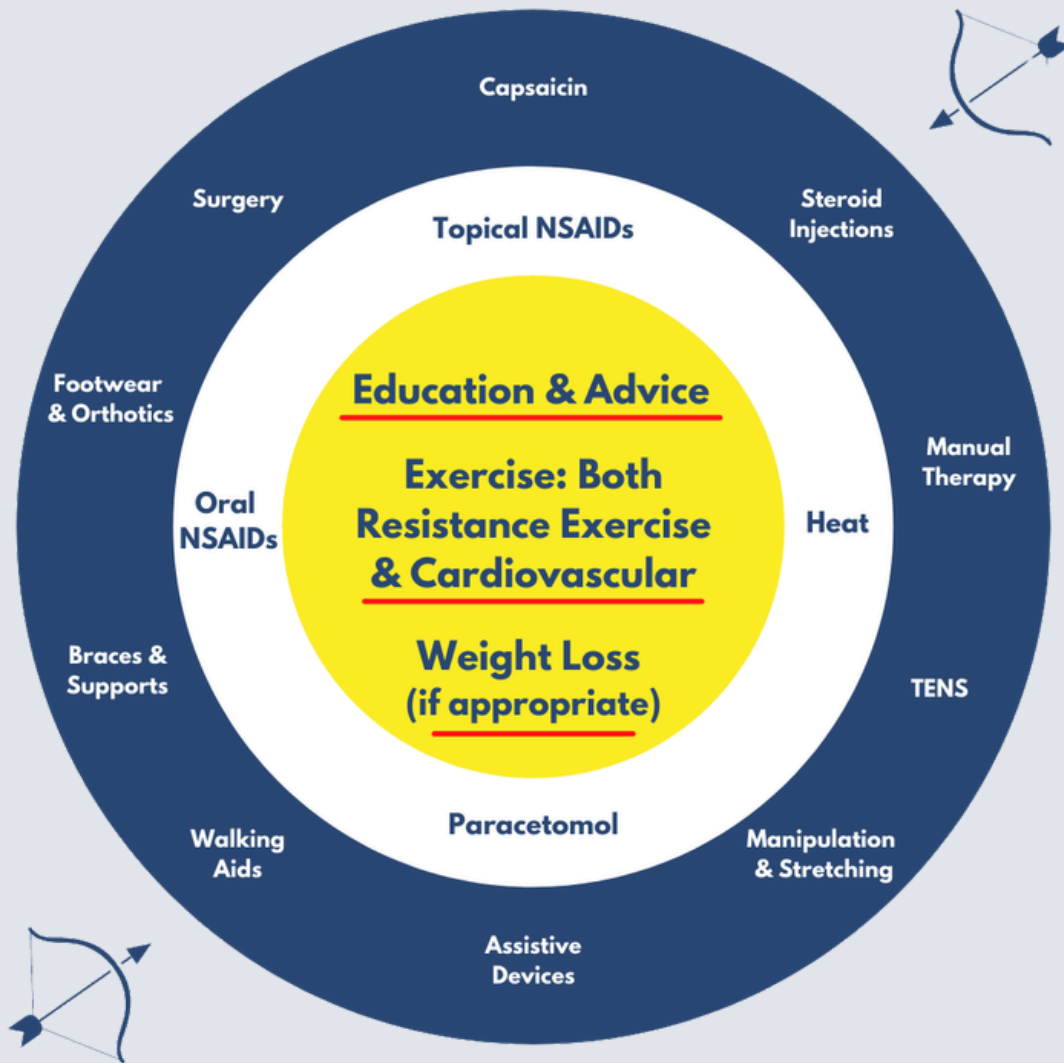
- **Education and advice:** Understanding that your joints are adaptable and that pain does not equal damage.
- **Exercise:** Using movement as a stimulus to improve joint capacity and resilience.
- **Weight management** (if appropriate): Reducing mechanical stress and systemic inflammation where appropriate.

These foundations are not quick fixes; they are the building blocks of long-term improvement. If you focus on what matters most first, progress becomes far more predictable.

In Chapter 4 of the [Ultimate Osteoarthritis Guide](#), we move beyond these basics to look at the full spectrum of evidence-based care.



THE OSTEOARTHRITIS TREATMENT TARGET



Based on guidelines from the National Institute of Health & Care Excellence

The centre of the target represents the interventions with the strongest evidence in osteoarthritis management. These are the foundations and should form the core of your approach.

The outer circles represent additional treatments that may support progress in certain situations, but they should not replace the basics.

Chapter 4 of the [Ultimate Osteoarthritis Guide](#) shows you how to prioritise these layers, ensuring you spend your energy on the "bullseye" targets that deliver the best results.

EXERCISE

Exercise is the most effective non-surgical treatment for osteoarthritis. However, for movement to be medicinal, it must be structured and personalised.

This is where most people struggle often oscillating between total avoidance of activity and doing "too much" too soon.

True joint resilience is built through three specific elements:

- **Strength training:** This must be progressive. By gradually increasing the load on your muscles, you improve the joint's capacity to absorb force and protect the cartilage.
- **Cardiovascular activity:** This supports systemic health and improves blood flow, which is essential for managing persistent joint stiffness.
- **Maintaining joint range:** Focusing on extension in the knee and hip ensures your body can maintain efficient, normal movement patterns during daily tasks.

Consistency matters more than intensity, but structure is what ensures safety.

While this guide provides the "what," Chapters 6 and 9 of the [Ultimate Osteoarthritis Guide](#) provide the "how". Including the specific loading principles needed to build a plan that adapts to your body.



WEIGHT AND INFLAMMATION

Weight management can play an important role in osteoarthritis, particularly for weight-bearing joints such as the knee and hip.

Even modest reductions in body weight can significantly reduce joint load, but the benefits go beyond simple mechanics.

Beyond mechanics, excess body fat is associated with low grade systemic inflammation, which can sensitise the nervous system and directly influence joint pain and overall tissue health.

A Mediterranean-style pattern of eating is consistently associated with improved metabolic and inflammatory health:

- Increase fruit and vegetables for antioxidant support.
- Reduce ultra-processed foods that drive inflammation.
- Moderate refined carbohydrates to stabilize energy.
- Limit excess alcohol to reduce systemic stress.

The goal is not perfection, but consistency.

Small, sustainable changes compound over time to create a more resilient internal environment. Because internal inflammation can cause symptoms to fluctuate regardless of your diet, Chapter 11 of the [Ultimate Osteoarthritis Guide](#) is dedicated to 'Optimising Flare-Up Management' to decrease them occurring and get you back to the things you enjoy when they do.





CHAPTER 4

WHERE TO GO FROM
HERE

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WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

This starter guide introduces the foundations. But understanding the principles and applying them confidently are two different things.

The Ultimate Osteoarthritis Guide is a 12-chapter roadmap designed to move you from uncertainty to clinical confidence. It is not a generic exercise sheet. It is the framework you need to build a bespoke approach for your life.

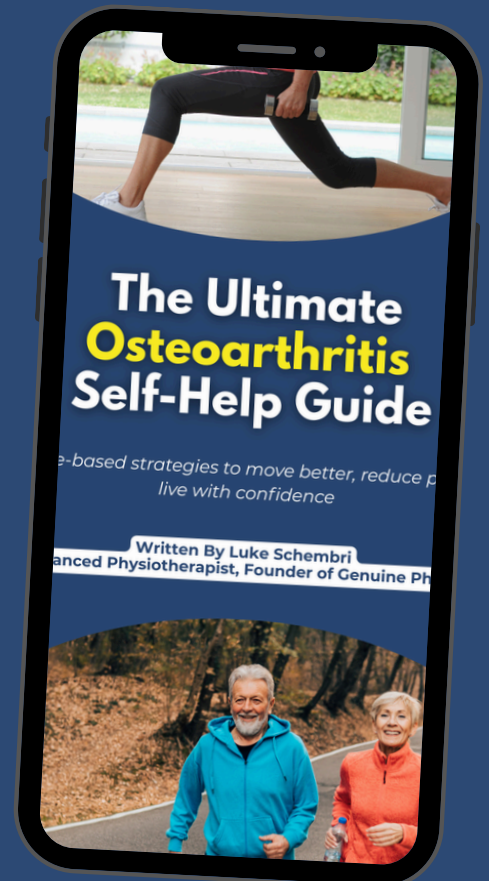
Inside, you will learn to:

- **Master the Principles:** Move past myths and understand joint biology.
- **Decode Your Pain:** Learn why symptoms fluctuate and how to respond.
- **Personalise Your Plan:** Master the rules of exercise selection and progression.
- **Control Flare-ups:** A step-by-step rescue plan to manage high-pain days.
- **Build Resilience:** The confidence to stay active for the long term.

It brings everything together in one structured pathway so you can move from uncertainty to confidence.

If you would like a deeper, more complete guide to follow, you can learn more here:

[👉 The Ultimate Osteoarthritis Self Help Guide](#)



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