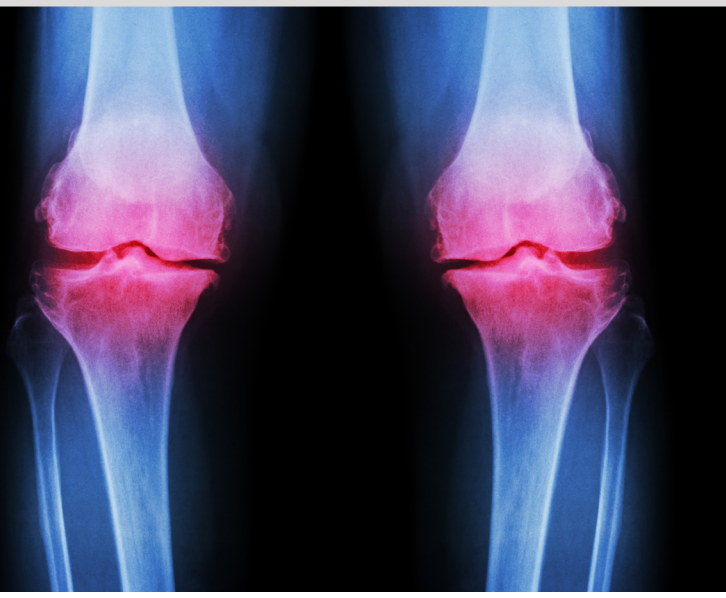
AAOS
American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons

Clinical Practice Guideline Overview

Management of Osteoarthritis of the Knee



Published August 31, 2021

This clinical practice guideline addresses the non-arthroplasty treatment of knee osteoarthritis in adults.

Literature Review

15,103 abstracts reviewed → **2,426** articles recalled for full review → **617** abstracts reviewed after full text review and quality analysis

Strong and Moderate Guideline Recommendations*

Lateral wedge insoles are not recommended for patients with knee osteoarthritis. **(S)**

Topical NSAIDs should be used to improve function and quality of life for treatment of osteoarthritis of the knee, when not contraindicated. **(S)**

Supervised exercise, unsupervised exercise, and/or aquatic exercise are recommended over no exercise to improve pain and function for treatment of knee osteoarthritis. **(S)**

Self-management programs are recommended to improve pain and function for patients with knee osteoarthritis. **(S)**

Patient education programs are recommended to improve pain in patients with knee osteoarthritis. **(S)**

Oral NSAIDs are recommended to improve pain and function in the treatment of knee osteoarthritis when not contraindicated. **(S)**

Oral acetaminophen is recommended to improve pain and function in the treatment of knee osteoarthritis when not contraindicated. **(S)**

Canes could be used to improve pain and function in patients with knee osteoarthritis. **(M)**

Brace treatment could be used to improved function, pain, and quality of life in patients with knee osteoarthritis. **(M)**

Sustained weight loss is recommended to improve pain and function in overweight and obese patients with knee osteoarthritis. **(M)**

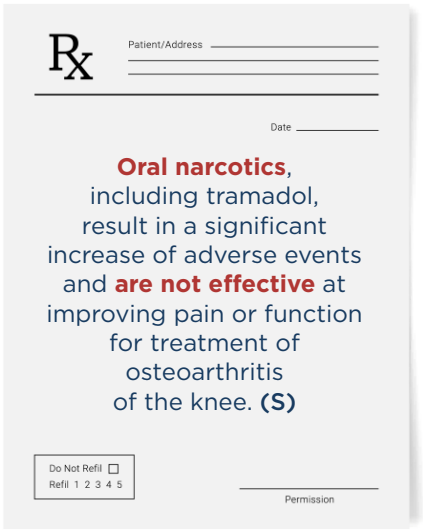
Neuromuscular training (i.e., balance, agility, coordination) programs in a combination with traditional exercise could be used to improve performance-based function and walking speed for treatment of osteoarthritis of the knee. **(M)**

Hyaluronic acid intra-articular injection(s) is not recommended for routine use of symptomatic osteoarthritis of the knee. **(M)**

Intra-articular (IA) corticosteroids could provide short-term relief for patients with osteoarthritis of the knee. **(M)**

Arthroscopy with lavage and/or debridement in patients with a primary diagnosis of knee osteoarthritis is not recommended. **(M)**

Arthroscopic partial meniscectomy can be used for the treatment of meniscal tears in patients with concomitant mild to moderate osteoarthritis who have failed physical therapy or other non-surgical treatments. **(M)**



Future Research

Consideration for future research is provided for each recommendation within this document are based on the work groups clinical experience and perceived need for better guiding data.

Learn More at OrthoGuidelines!

To view the rationale for these recommendations and the limited and consensus recommendations, visit **OrthoGuidelines.org**

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