

# VitaMin

Vital health information in a minute

## HELP KEEP YOUR KNEES YOUNG

With age, the cartilage in your knees can wear down, and you may have the pain, stiffness and swelling of arthritis in your joints. Knee injuries can also damage your joints and make them harder to move. But you can take steps now to combat knee pain and prevent injuries. In some cases, it's possible to prevent knee problems or avoid the need for knee replacement surgery later in life.<sup>1</sup>

### Strengthen your legs

Your knee depends on the muscles around it to cushion the impact and pressure of everyday use. When you build up your leg muscles, this helps stabilize the joint and absorb the stress on your knee. The main muscles to focus on are your quadriceps (the muscles above your knee on the front of your thigh) and hamstrings (back of your thigh). Strengthening the hip and core muscles also helps with stability.

Build strength with low-impact exercises like walking, cycling and strength training. See a physical therapist or trainer for help creating a strength-training regimen that's right for you.

### Lose weight

Extra weight puts more pressure on your knees than you may realize. It's estimated that for every extra pound you carry, there's an added 4 pounds of pressure on your knees. For example, losing 10 pounds could relieve 40 pounds of pressure on your knees.<sup>1</sup>

Set a goal for weight loss that's within your reach so you can make progress right away. Talk to your doctor if you need help getting started with a weight-loss plan.

### Improve flexibility

You know the feeling when you've been sitting for a long time and it's hard to get up? This is caused by stiff joints – which can be painful and worsen with age. That's why movement is so important if you want to help keep your knees healthy. Gentle exercise and stretching can help maintain your range of motion and prevent stiffness in your joints.

Work on flexibility by stretching the muscles in your legs. Or, try a gentle yoga or tai chi class.

### Find the right shoes

High-heeled shoes can lead to knee pain because they make your thighs work harder to stay balanced. A supportive, good-fitting shoe can take pressure off your knees and help you maintain stability.

Shop for shoes that fit well, support you and distribute your weight evenly. Always try on shoes to ensure a good fit and consider adding high-quality insoles for extra cushioning.

### Source:

<sup>1</sup> Harvard Health Publishing. "Age-proof your knees." Web (last reviewed/updated May 2017)

This is general health information and not medical advice or services. You should consult your doctor for medical advice or services, including seeking advice prior to undertaking a new diet or exercise program.

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