



TARGETING

ACHES AND PAINS



Perry County Memorial Hospital

people *care* more here

Let's face it. Joint pain isn't anyone's favorite topic of discussion. What you can't ignore though, is that over **30%** of adults today are experiencing extreme joint pain of some kind. Not only is that number rapidly increasing, but now up to **15 million** American adults can agree that joint pain is affecting their daily life in some way. The tricky part in all of this is being able to identify why it hurts based on where it hurts. If we can do that, there is a good chance we can fix the problem and you can begin to experience comfort again.

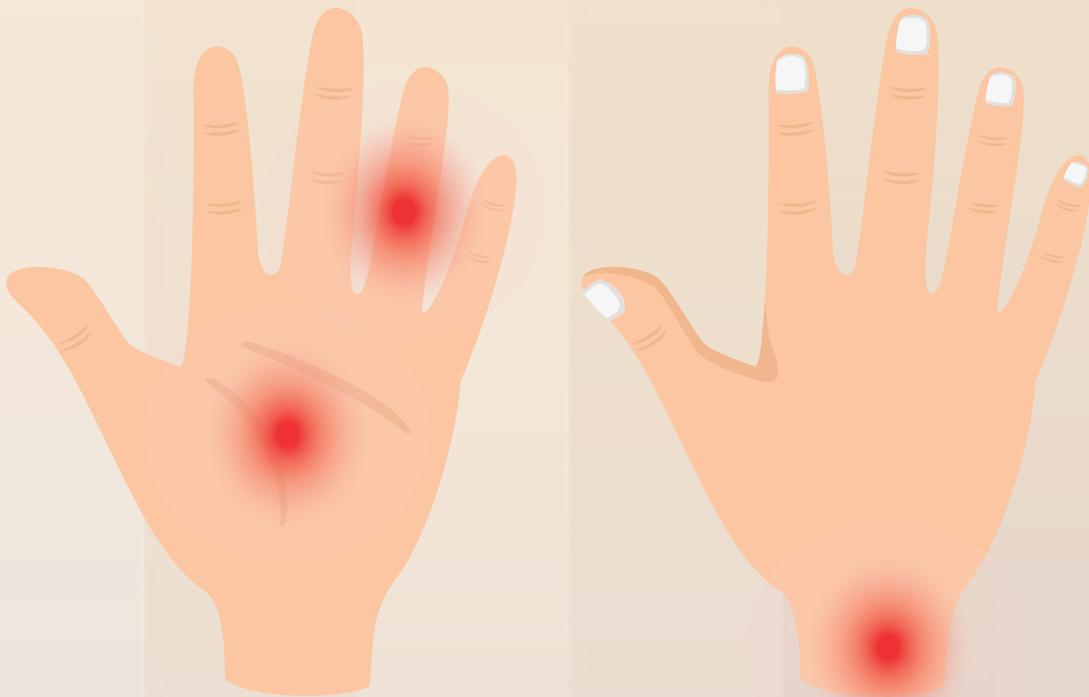


“Where does it hurt?” Most people have been asked this basic question at least once at the doctor's office, but this simple question is important!

The location of the pain is vital to the diagnosis. Let's take a look at some of the most common sites of joint pain and why they might be causing discomfort.

The **hands, wrists, and fingers** are a package deal. Unfortunately, this holds true even when it comes to joint pain. In order to understand what is producing the problem, let's first dive into the anatomical structure of the trio. Starting at the top, the wrist is where the radius and ulna meet the carpus - connecting your hands to your arms.

Moving past the carpus, you will find the metacarpals and phalanges- or in other words, the hands and fingers. The average person's wrists, hands, and fingers total up to about **27** joints each, making the area widely susceptible to discomfort. After looking at the anatomy of this specific sight of pain, you may be wondering exactly what the causes might be.



First and foremost, the more obvious causes include previous injury and arthritis. Did you know that even after recovering from an injury in the hands, wrists, and fingers you are likely to experience **recurrent joint pain?** There are also many types of arthritis that can wreak havoc across the area -- the most common being Osteoarthritis. This is when the places connecting your bones begin to break down, creating stiffness and aching pain.

Although this is fairly common, there are certain symptoms to look for that may require seeing a doctor. If you start experiencing intense numbness, stiffness, or swelling of any kind, it should not be ignored. Visiting an orthopedic physician could be the best plan of action for resolving the issue.

So what might a trip to the doctor look like?

Scheduling an appointment might seem intimidating at first, but with the appropriate care you will be able to quickly address the problem and focus on treating it. Upon arrival, your orthopedic physician will carefully inspect your hands, wrists, and fingers and observe your ability to move them. If they notice that something isn't right with the movement or appearance, you could be asked to do an X-ray or participate in more testing.



Depending on what is found, your doctor may go about treatment in a variety of ways. Sometimes it can be as simple as wearing a splint or brace, or applying heat or ice. Other times medication or therapy can be used.

Let's move on to your **shoulders**. Everyone's experienced a case of tense shoulders after a long day, but what if there was more to it? Within the shoulder there are two joints that allow for circular movement - so as you can imagine, when trouble hits one of the two, mobility in this area can be affected almost immediately. The most common causes of shoulder pain typically fall into two categories - issues within your rotator cuff and types of arthritis.

Whether it be rotator cuff tendonitis or osteoarthritis described previously, that tenderness and aching pain in your shoulder will not feel good. When the rotator cuff gets caught in between the scapula and humerus, rotator cuff tendonitis can occur. With this, it is possible to develop various symptoms such as difficulty reaching, swelling in the front of the shoulder, and sometimes snapping sounds that accompany movement. Osteoarthritis, as discussed with hands, wrists, and fingers, is the breaking down of joints. Specifically in the shoulder, it is when the two joints begin to rub together and deteriorate causing excessive pain and stiffness.



In efforts to free you from this joint pain in your shoulders, your orthopedic physician could handle treatment in a number of ways. Typically, the plan of action is based on what symptoms you have encountered. Examining the exterior area will prove if further testing is necessary.

The majority of the time, treating shoulder pain can go one of two ways. Decreasing swelling and relieving discomfort can be done by taking anti-inflammatory medication. For a more serious diagnosis, a condition-specific medication may be given. If your trip to the doctor comes down to needing a shoulder replacement or repair, surgery followed by physical therapy could be recommended.

Next up, let's talk about **hip pain**. The trouble with this type of joint pain is the fact that your hip bones act as connectors for many other bones in your body; piecing together the entire puzzle.

This makes it especially fitting that it is also the most weight bearing area.

Multiple muscles surrounding the hip bones provide support for your joints, helping you move! Because of the large role of these bones and joints as connectors, there are various causes of pain. Much like any part of the body experiencing joint pain, it is no surprise that arthritis in the hip can also be an underlying cause. In addition, there are countless types of hip injuries that can increase your chances of discomfort, like breaks or dislocations.



In treating these pain inflicting symptoms, seeing your orthopedic physician is the best solution. When doing so, your physician will begin the diagnosis by learning about your medical history and physically examining the site of pain. Many times you will be asked to try and rotate the hip and describe the pain you feel. With this information, your doctor will be able to determine what needs to happen next, which could stop at diagnosis or continue with further lab and imaging tests.

Treating hip pain can be done by the obvious, medication or surgery, based on what is concluded by your doctor. Another tool used in treatment is exercise. Short strengthening exercises daily can help to regain movement and decrease the chances of further injury.

Lastly...the dreaded **knee pain**. Did you know that **over 50%** of the population will end up experiencing knee problems at some point in their life? Now that's a daunting fact! So what causes this to occur? This unpleasant feeling is typically the result of a past injury or type of arthritis.

With the knee being one of the most injury-prone joints in the body, it is not uncommon to experience pain even after recovery. While there are many different types of arthritis, the most common is Osteoarthritis, which seems to tie in with most joint pain. This involves the wearing and tearing of joints that connect and support the three bones in your knee. Aside from the most common, other key contributors include aging, excess weight gain, engaging in rigorous physical activity, and even simply genetics. General symptoms that may occur with any of these could be swelling, instability, decreased range of motion, or cracking and popping sounds that follow movement.



So what should you do if you begin to experience these symptoms of joint pain in your knee? At this time, it would be appropriate to schedule an appointment to see your orthopedic physician. In doing this, your doctor will observe how well you are able to move your knee, while looking for tender or swollen spots to rule out the possibility of infection.

In order to determine the most effective method of treatment, you may be asked about your medical history or to participate in further testing. Moving forward, there will be a variety of options to choose from based on your level of pain. With the help of your orthopedic physician, those decisions can be made quickly to put you back on the right track.

Developing chronic joint pain or living with it is something that no one wants to do. In attempting to prevent this, it is helpful to know exactly what is to be expected if you begin experiencing pain across major parts of the body. If it comes to that, choosing an orthopedic physician can be of extreme importance and should not be taken lightly!



You want someone that not only has passion and knowledge in the field, but someone that values you as a patient. Perry County Orthopedics & Sports Medicine can be found on Perry County Memorial Hospital's campus. The staff is a group of hardworking individuals, including orthopedic expert Dr. Joseph B. Byrne. They are dedicated to living out the hospital's mission statement,

“ People *care* more here. ”

To contact us regarding joint pain or to schedule a visit, click [here](#).

People
care
more here.



Perry County
Memorial Hospital



434 North West Street | Perryville, MO 63775



573.547.2536



PERRY COUNTY
ORTHOPEDICS &
SPORTS MEDICINE



206 Hospital Lane, Suite 202 | Perryville, MO 63775



573.768.3396