

osteoarthritis and ligament pain



Fixing what's wrong. Relieving what hurts.

What is osteoarthritis?

Osteoarthritis is a degenerative disorder of the joints that can cause joint pain, loss of function, reduced joint motion and deformity. It occurs when bone-on-bone surfaces become irregular. Also known as "degenerative joint disease," osteoarthritis can involve any joint but most often affects large joints like the hip or knee and small joints in the fingers. It is so common that nearly everyone past the age of 30 has some kind of osteoarthritis evident on X-rays.

What are ligaments?

Ligaments are the bands of strong, fibrous tissue that connect bone to bone. In joints, ligaments provide strength and stability.

What is the connection between osteoarthritis and ligament pain?

At Piedmont Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Dr. Robert G. Schwartz compares the joint to a hinge. In osteoarthritis, the hinge's pivoting surfaces become irregular, impeding its normal function. The ligaments are effectively the pin that holds the hinge together and provides its stability.

Ultimately, anything that affects the function of the hinge, or joint, can cause joint pain. This includes bone-on-bone irregularity, weak ligaments, irritated nerves, lack of blood flow and tight muscles. The connection is that treating these disorders often relieves the joint pain.

How is joint pain diagnosed?

It's no secret: Joint pain is a signal that something is wrong. It could be the result of a spasm, a tight or weak ligament, roughness resulting from bone-on-bone contact or one

of several other possibilities. Dr. Schwartz may use musculoskeletal ultrasound, additional imaging, EMG testing, computerized gait analysis, Doppler analysis of blood flow, or other diagnostic studies in combination with a complete medical history and physical examination to pinpoint the cause of the pain.

How is joint pain treated?

By treating all the structures that surround or affect the joint, lubricating the inside of the joint and helping to restore cartilage integrity, Dr. Schwartz is able to help the joint return to normal. Proper function, in turn, provides relief and prevents further deterioration of the joint. Dr. Schwartz uses several methods to achieve this, including injections of special medications that regrow soft tissue or in special cases even bone.

Much like a scab that heals skin, Proliferative (or Prolotherapy) injections jump start the body's own natural wound healing process. After three injections done at approximately two-week intervals, the ligament is actually 40 percent thicker, and six out of ten say they are at least two thirds or more improved.

PRP injections are stronger than Prolotherapy injections. With PRP concentrated growth factors from your own blood stimulate tissue repair. Yet another procedure called percutaneous tenotomy is a relatively painless technique that is used to repair tendons during an office visit.

Stem cell grafting is the newest innovation. Fat or bone marrow cells are harvested and then injected back into joints to reduce osteoarthritis pain as an alternative to arthroscopic or joint replacement surgery. 80 percent of patients report at least 50 percent relief.

Stretching what's tight, strengthening what's weak, treating missed nerve damage, increasing blood flow, improving joint mechanics, and good nutrition are other helpful treatments. In summary, Dr. Schwartz will think outside the box to keep you pain free and your joints in motion.

Resolving even the most complex pain with innovative solutions and proven leadership.



PIEDMONT
PHYSICAL MEDICINE
& REHABILITATION

Pioneers in understanding & resolving pain

317 St. Francis Drive, Suite 350

Greenville, SC 29601

Tel: (864) 235-1834 | Fax: (864) 235-2486

www.piedmontpmr.com