

THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2009 ★ "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" II COR. 3:17 ★ 75 CENTS ★ CITY FINAL



3 ways to relieve pain in aching joints

If joint aches and pains are keeping you from becoming more physically active, you don't have to give up exercising to stay pain-free.

A lack of exercise may actually cause joints to become even more painful and stiffer than they usually are, says Dr. G. Peter Maiers of Methodist Sports Medicine/The Orthopedic Specialists.

"When you exercise, you strengthen the muscles around the joint, which helps relieve stress and builds flexibility and endurance," he said.

According to the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention, joint pain is one of the most common complaints among Americans. About 10 percent of U.S. women and 7 percent of men say they suffer from severe joint pain.

More information about dealing with joint pain can be found at www.methodistsports.com.

Maiers says these guidelines are ideal for those who want to ease their joint pain:

1 | MAINTAIN MUSCLE STRENGTH: It's important to keep the muscles

surrounding the joint area strong and to stretch properly before working out. Tight or stiff muscles around a joint will make the area more prone to injury.

2 | TRY LOWER-IMPACT EXERCISES:

Exercise that helps improve range-of-motion, such as yoga or dance, is the best form of exercise for people with joint pain.

The exercise should be done daily. It increases flexibility, relieves stiffness and maintains normal joint movement. Be sure to use gentle, gradual movements,



not jerky ones, to minimize risk of further injury or pain.

3 | TREAT JOINTS WITH HOT PACKS:

To make sure your exercise routine is beneficial to your joints, put hot packs on the joints you'll be exercising for about 20 minutes before you work out. This will help relax your joints and relieve pain before you begin.

After exercising, apply a cold pack to those same joints for 10 to 15 minutes to reduce swelling or pain.

— Barb Berggoetz