



Physiotherapy

JUVENILE IDIOPATHIC ARTHRITIS

Your physiotherapist

- is part of your rheumatology team
- knows how joints and muscles work

Your physiotherapist can

- help keep your muscles strong
- tell you about suitable physical activities
- give advice on splinting and protective equipment
- discuss ways to reduce stress on painful and inflamed joints
- answer your questions
- plan exercises to keep your joints moving normally and to help reduce the pain of JIA.

Physical activity

Physical activity and exercise should be a part of every day. It can:

- help your mood and confidence
- make you more independent
- keep your joints flexible
- make your muscles strong

Take part in activities and games with other kids. Take a rest when you feel tired or sore. The amount of activity you can do will change from day to day, as will the amount of pain and swelling that you might have.

It is OK to limit your activity when you are unwell or your joints are hurting.

With long distance activities, like cross-country running or bushwalking, take a break and have a rest when you need to.

Avoid carrying heavy weights, like heavy school bags or heavy books. Try to spread the weight over many joints rather than only one. Use a backpack on both shoulders instead of a carry bag.

Flare up – try these activities

If your JIA flares up, activities like swimming, especially in a heated pool, cycling and walking are good. When your JIA is well controlled, you can do normal activities and games like most people your age.

Flare up – avoid these activities

Avoid activities that jar or overstress your joints, like:

- jumping on a mat, floor or trampoline
- throwing and catching hard or heavy balls
- using heavy bats in ball games
- contact sports or competitive sports
- repetitive activities

These activities can usually be changed, for example by using lighter bats and softer balls.

