

# ARTHRITIS and Osteopathy

**Ian Whyte D.O.**  
**Kirsten Nottrot D.O.**  
**Rebecca Podmore BSc (Ost) Hons. BA**  
**Rachel Griffin BSc (Ost) Hons. Dip PGO**

## Registered Osteopaths

Established 1978.



19, Lichfield Street.  
Stone.  
Staffs.  
ST15 8NA  
Tel: 01785 816481.

Castlefields Surgery.  
Castle Way.  
Castlefields.  
Stafford.  
ST16 1BS  
Tel: 01785 248298

[www.staffs-osteopaths.co.uk](http://www.staffs-osteopaths.co.uk)



The aim of this small leaflet is to explain to you something about the condition of arthritis and how osteopathy can help.

The term arthritis is a very general one and covers numerous clinical conditions. ARTH means 'joint' and ITIS means 'inflammation'. So if, for example, you twist your ankle and it swells up, then you have a joint (ARTH) which is inflamed (ITIS) and therefore, strictly speaking, you have a certain type of arthritis. In this example, the injury is usually very quick to recover and you can soon forget all about it.

As you can see then, arthritis is not necessarily always that serious a problem. However, most people tend to associate the word '*arthritis*' with two particular clinical conditions, namely:

Osteoarthritis and Rheumatoid Arthritis.

Osteopathy is of help in many forms of arthritis but this particular leaflet will deal solely with Osteoarthritis.

Osteoarthritis may be looked upon very loosely as the wear and tear situation of the joints of the body. It occurs in about 10% of the population as a whole, and 50% of those over 60, and the disease itself affects the cartilage in the joints. Cartilage is a very strong, smooth tissue that covers the joint surfaces of the body which in turn are lubricated by a substance called synovial fluid, which acts in a similar way to that of oil in a car engine.

As the cartilage wears a bit thin, then the joint may become stiff, painful and even creak as it can no longer move as smoothly as it used to. The commonest joints affected are as follows:

The top joints of the fingers

The base of the thumbs

The hips

The knees

The big toes

The little hinge joints in the neck and the base of the back.

There is often a family tendency towards Osteoarthritis and being overweight can particularly affect the knees. Osteoarthritis may also affect where there has been a previous injury, for example: fractures or recurrent dislocations, and it may also occur as a complication in certain other conditions.

So, what can be done?

In many cases, quite a lot!

Your Osteopath will be trying to improve the way in which your joints actually work. Most joints affected with Osteoarthritis perform at a fraction of their true potential and your Osteopath will endeavour to get the joint or joints concerned working as efficiently as possible. This will usually involve stretching and articulation of the joint and the muscles, tendons and ligaments around it. He/she may also treat other parts of the body which may be having a detrimental affect on the joints concerned.

Advice regarding general lifestyle or exercise (to build up any wasted muscle) and diet, together with any other specific ways to improve your situation, may be given by your Osteopath as and when appropriate.

Sometimes surgery is necessary in extreme circumstances e.g. a replacement hip, but the vast majority of cases do not require such intervention and will respond to conservative treatment.

If you have any further questions regarding Osteoarthritis that have not been covered here, or in fact anything to do with how Osteopathy could help you, then please feel free to ring either of the practices to speak to one of the Osteopaths in attendance.