

The background features a dark red field with vibrant, wavy bands of red and blue. In the corners, there are stylized geometric shapes: a blue circle with a black starburst pattern in the top-left and bottom-left, and a red square with a white grid pattern in the top-left and bottom-left.

STAYING MOVING, STAYING STRONG
OSTEOARTHRITIS

WHAT IS OSTEOARTHRITIS?

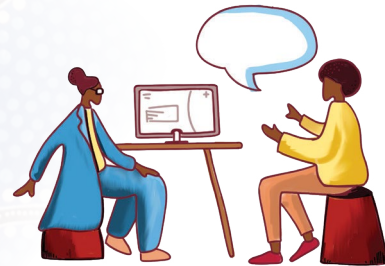
- Osteoarthritis is when your joints, such as your knees, hips, back and hands are stiff and sore.
- This can happen for lots of reasons - weak muscles, not enough exercise or sleep, poor diet, smoking or stress.
- You're more likely to get osteoarthritis if it runs in the family, if you are overweight, or if you've had a big injury to the joint in the past.
- People can experience osteoarthritis at any age.
- It's often described as joint 'wear and tear'. But using your joints won't wear them away. Joints need to move to be healthy.

WHAT DOES OSTEOARTHRITIS FEEL LIKE?

- It's common to feel joint aches and pains. Joints can also be swollen or feel stiff.
- There can be good and bad days. Bad days (e.g. when joints are stiff and sore) are called 'flare ups'.
- Often joints feel more stiff and sore in the morning, before you get moving.
- Joint aches and pains can affect your body, mind and spirit.

Everyone with osteoarthritis has a different story.

"I notice I was just getting slower and slower and lots of aches and pains" — Aboriginal woman, aged 67.



HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE OSTEOARTHRITIS?

- If you feel joint pain or stiffness, have a yarn with your doctor, health worker or physio.
- A doctor or physio doesn't need an x-ray or scan to diagnose osteoarthritis.
- They will ask you questions about your pain and look at your joints and movement.

HOW CAN I LOOK AFTER OSTEOARTHRITIS?

Some mob reckon there's not much you can do for your osteoarthritis, but with the right plan you can live well with it.

STAYING MOVING, STAYING STRONG

- Staying moving is the best way to look after your osteoarthritis. It keeps your bones, joints and muscles healthy, and is good for your mind too.



"I go to the gym and do stuff to keep me in shape, which helps with my day to day. It's when I stop exercising, that's when my knees play up" — Wotjobaluk/Gunaikurnai man, aged 52.

- Any movement is better than no movement. Do something you enjoy, like walking with your grannies or on Country or exercising in water.
- It's safe to be active, even if it's a bit sore at the start. Start slow and see a physio or exercise physiologist to make a plan.

MEDICINES

- Medicines can help joint aches and pains.
- Yarn with your doctor before trying medicines.
- Medicines that might help are:
 - Medicines for pain (e.g. paracetamol).
 - Medicines to help swelling (inflammation) (e.g. ibuprofen).

BUSH MEDICINE

- Bush medicines may help alongside Western medicine. Yarn with your local Aboriginal health service or Cultural Elder to find out more.



LIVE HEALTHY

- Eating healthy, being active and looking after your weight can help your osteoarthritis. Talk to your doctor or dietitian about a plan.
- Cut down, or if you can, get off the smokes. This will keep your body healthy and help with your joint pain.
- Osteoarthritis can make you feel down and frustrated. Yarn about your feelings with family, doctor or staff at your Aboriginal health service.

SURGERY

- Most people can look after osteoarthritis without surgery.
- For a small number of people surgery can help.
- Yarn with your doctor or physio to see if surgery is an option for you.

DON'T BE SHAME ABOUT ASKING QUESTIONS

The more you know about your osteoarthritis, the more you can be in charge of your health and wellbeing.

SOME QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK YOUR DOCTOR:

- What can I do to live well with osteoarthritis?
- What is going to happen in the future?
- Where can I go for help?



ABOUT THE ARTIST

THOMAS MARKS – LIVING WITH ARTHRITIS

Thomas 'Marksey' Marks is a proud Wotjobaluk/ Gunaikurnai man from Gippsland. Being one of many Stolen Generations children, he wasn't able to grow up on his traditional Country. As an adult, he is now proudly reclaiming his Aboriginal identity through art. In his artwork 'Living With Arthritis' Thomas tells the story of his struggle with arthritis and the journey he is on to fight back against the pain. It's also a story for others who experience arthritis and go through life followed by this lingering pain.



NICOLE DICKERSON – HEALING TOGETHER

Nicole is a Yamaji Woman from Geraldton Western Australia with connections to the Amangu, Naaguja, Wilunyu and Ngarluma People. Nicole grew up interested in art with her creative ways coming from her Dad. Nicole's art is her form of healing, strength, her words when she cannot speak, and most importantly it's her story. In 'Healing together' Nicole tells the story of how the rain falls on the land, connecting people, cleansing the mind, body & soul, from one place that connects two, to support Healing Together on one land.



WHERE CAN I GO FOR HELP?

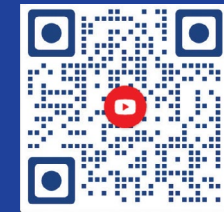
If joint pains are stopping you from living well, have a yarn with your doctor, health worker or physio.

If you'd like help finding your local Aboriginal health service have a look at these links:

<https://askizzy.org.au>

<https://www.naccho.org.au/naccho-map>

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT OSTEOARTHRITIS?



Scan here
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This brochure was developed with funding from the Australian Government and support from Arthritis Australia