



**Know Your Joints**  
**Muscle and Joint Care**  
**Suggestions**

**Exercise therapy  
and lifestyle  
modifications  
are often more  
effective in the  
long term in the  
management of  
musculoskeletal  
issues**

While manual therapy, bodywork, acupuncture, and chiropractic care have their benefits, relying solely on these therapies for extended periods may provide limited long-term benefits. Exercise therapy, along with lifestyle modifications, should be considered as a primary approach for managing and preventing musculoskeletal issues. It addresses the underlying causes, provides long-term benefits, and complements other manual therapies for optimal outcomes.

# Exercise therapy and lifestyle modifications are often more effective in the long term in the management of musculoskeletal issues

I am all in favor of utilizing various types of manual therapy, such as body works, acupuncture, and chiropractic care, as part of a comprehensive approach to managing musculoskeletal issues. However, I believe that relying solely on these therapies for extended periods of time may provide limited long-term benefits. I believe while manual therapy, bodywork, acupuncture, and chiropractic care can be valuable components of a comprehensive approach to managing musculoskeletal issues, exercise therapy and lifestyle modifications are often more effective in the long term.

Research has shown that understanding the body and conditioning oneself properly are critical components to managing and preventing musculoskeletal issues. While manual therapy and other forms of bodywork can provide immediate pain relief, they may not address the underlying causes of the issue. In contrast, exercise therapy has been found to be effective in reducing pain and improving function in individuals with musculoskeletal issues.

A systematic review published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* found that exercise therapy is consistently effective in reducing pain and improving function in individuals with chronic low back pain. The review included 32 randomized controlled trials with a total of 6,062 participants and concluded that exercise therapy was more effective than no treatment, placebo, or usual care. Another systematic review published in the *Journal of Orthopaedic & Sports Physical Therapy* compared the effectiveness of exercise therapy versus manual therapy for individuals with hip osteoarthritis. The review included 10 randomized controlled trials with a total of 684 participants and found that exercise therapy was more effective than manual therapy for improving function and reducing pain. According to a study published in the *Journal of Orthopaedic & Sports Physical Therapy*, exercise therapy is effective for reducing pain and improving function in individuals with chronic low back pain. The study found that combining exercise therapy with manual therapy was more effective than manual therapy alone.

Another study published in the *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics* found that spinal manipulation, a technique commonly used by chiropractors, was effective in reducing pain and improving function in individuals with chronic low back pain. However, the study also noted that exercise therapy should be included in the treatment plan for optimal outcomes.

Furthermore, research published in the *Journal of Acupuncture and Meridian Studies* suggests that acupuncture may be effective in reducing pain and improving function in individuals with knee osteoarthritis. However, the study also suggests that acupuncture should be combined with exercise therapy for optimal outcomes.

While exercise therapy may involve reducing motion or activity in some cases, strengthening exercises are often a major solution to managing and preventing musculoskeletal issues. Additionally, maintaining proper posture, taking breaks from prolonged sitting or standing, and maintaining a healthy weight can also help prevent and manage such issues.