

Osteoarthritis is commonly diagnosed based on symptoms alone

Symptoms

Pain when moving or loading the joint

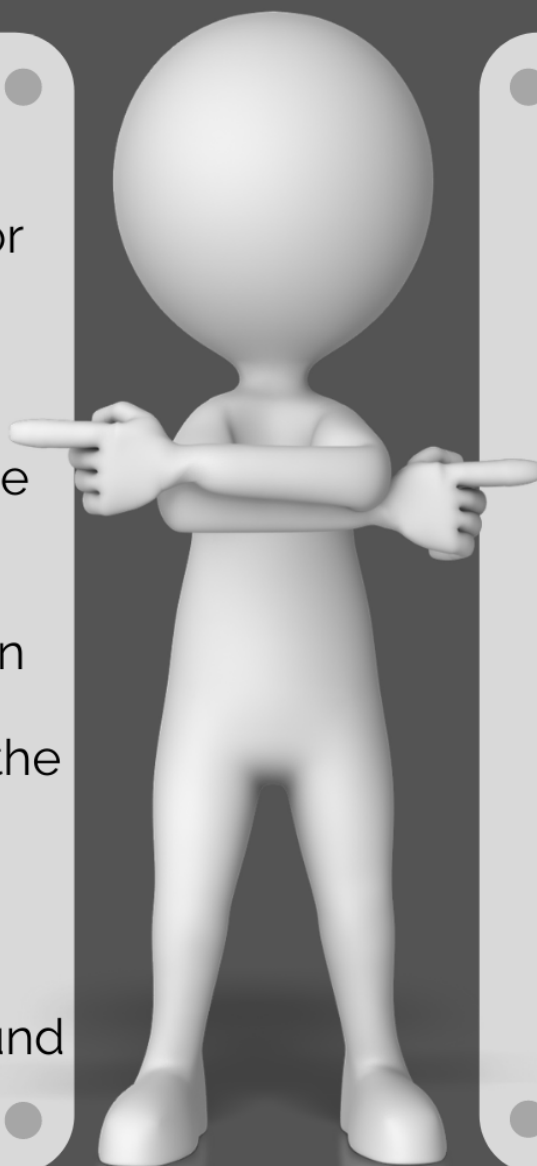
Joint stiffness and problems starting the day

Less range of motion

Heat and swelling at the joint

Muscle tightness

Difficulty moving around



Imaging (scans)

Symptoms can be felt for 10-15 years before changes show up on an X-Ray or MRI

At later stages the scans will show:

Smaller joint space

Changes in the shape of cartilage



Despite seeing changes on a scan, these do not always directly correlate with the amount of pain or stiffness you will feel. On the other hand your joint may be very painful despite the scans being normal.