

Osteoarthritis – Affected joints and causes of pain [1]

Affected joints

A

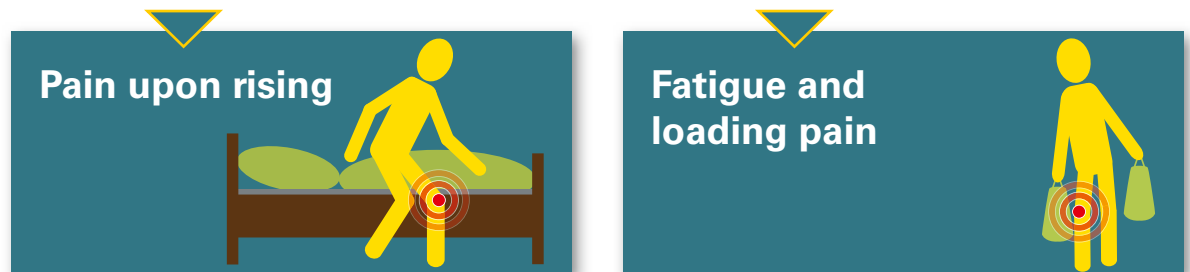


- **Common:** shoulder joint, finger joints, hip and knee joints, facet joints
- **Rare:** elbows, wrists and ankles

Osteoarthritic pain in the early stage

B

Irritation due to cell debris, Inflammation, triggered by cell debris (activated osteoarthritis), stretching of the articular capsule (effusion), reduced loading capacity of bone, muscle tension



Osteoarthritic pain in the late stage

C

Exposed articular bone with defects, irritant effusion, joint misalignments and bone spurs (osteophytes), painful restriction of function and movement



The pain picture is not predictable individually!

Osteoarthritis – Affected joints and causes of pain [1]

A Affected joints

Commonly affected are: shoulder joint, finger joints, hip and knee joints and vertebral joints (facet joints).

Elbows, wrists and ankles are rarely affected.

B Osteoarthritic pain in the early stage

The most significant causes of pain in the early stage are: irritation and inflammation due to cell debris (activated osteoarthritis), stretching of the articular capsule (effusion), reduced loading capacity of bone, muscle tension.

These lead to the typical picture of pain in the early stage, which is manifested by pain and stiffness upon rising in the morning, fatigue and pain upon loading.

An important aim of treatment at this stage is to prevent pain becoming chronic.

C Osteoarthritic pain in the late stage

The most important causes of pain in the late stage are: exposed articular bone with defects, irritant effusion, joint misalignments and deformations with the formation of bone spurs (osteophytes), lasting painful restriction of function and movement due to the contraction of surrounding soft tissues (muscles, tendons and ligaments).

These lead to continuous pain, nocturnal pain and muscular pain.

The pain experience and pain intensity cannot be predicted individually. Nor does the extent of the symptoms often correspond to the X-ray findings. The symptoms experienced may be substantial in mild cases, while they may be slight even in advanced osteoarthritis.

[1] Hunter DJ et al. Rheum Dis Clin North Am (2008) 34(3): 623- 643.