

EFFECTS OF WEIGHT LOSS ON MUSCULOSKELETON SYSTEM

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the
OSTEOPATHIC
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LOSING WEIGHT THE RIGHT WAY

Movement is vital to just about everything that we do from getting out of bed in the morning to feeding ourselves. It is our musculoskeletal system (MSS) which enables us to move, as well as providing postural support and protection for our internal organs. It is therefore critical that we take good care of it!

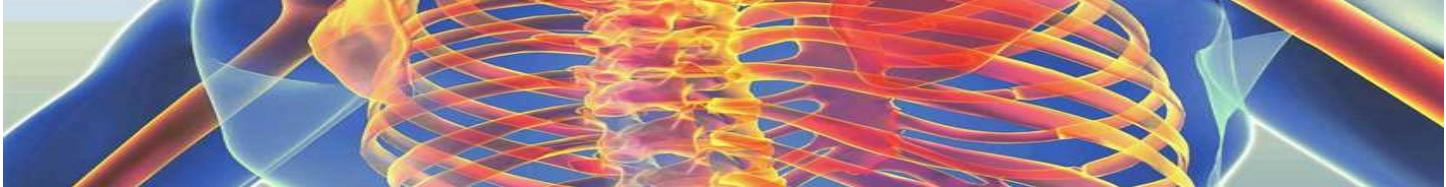
The MSS is made up of various elements which work together to allow a full range of movement, support and protection.

These include bones, ligaments, cartilage, muscles, tendons, which encapsulate joints and bursa which

are small fluid-filled sacks that prevent friction between adjoining tissues. During our day-to-day activities, mechanical forces are placed on the various tissues within the MSS which cause micro-trauma and breakdown on a cellular level. The body is usually able to repair such problems before any significant damage occurs. However, if the micro-trauma or breakdown occurs at a rate greater than the body's ability to regenerate, injury to the tissue may result. Being overweight increases the stresses experienced by the MSS and can upset the fine balance between breakdown and repair.

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The pathologies of the MSS commonly associated with increased body weight include osteoarthritis, spondylosis, degenerative disc disease and lower back strain. If these conditions become severe enough, they can make performing simple daily tasks such as getting out of a chair difficult or, in some very extreme instances, impossible. In the most severe cases, surgery may be necessary. Weight loss can greatly lower the risk of developing these conditions in the first place. If these pathologies already exist, losing weight will be unlikely to reverse the condition but it will often help to reduce the pain.

When attempting to lose weight, it is important to do so gradually, by eating a diet which is high in nutrients and by exercising regularly. This will help to maintain both bone density and muscle mass as well as keeping your body generally healthy. Muscle will help to support your joints and keep them healthy. It will also help to keep your body fat low as muscle is a "hungry" tissue which burns calories even when at rest.

Maintaining bone density is important as this prevents osteoporosis which causes the bones to become brittle and weak. Exercise within your limit as too much exercise can overload the joint and cause tissue damage. If you are overweight, it is best to focus on low impact activities such as walking, cycling, swimming and using a cross-trainer in the gym.

If you do experience muscle or joint pain, it may be helpful to visit an Osteopath who can help to treat the pain and advice on what exercise is suitable for you. This can help you to keep active and in turn help you to lose weight.

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