

**EDITORIAL****Exercise and Physical Activity for Musculoskeletal Care  
In A New Normal****Muhammad Kamil Che Hasan & Nik Noor Kaussar Nik Mohd Hatta\***

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Musculoskeletal disorders are increasing in trend, affecting people throughout the lifespan in all regions of the world. Participation restriction, limitation in activity and lived with disability are among the impact of musculoskeletal disorders (1). Musculoskeletal disorders also having similar risks with cardiovascular diseases, chronic respiratory problem, or diabetes mellitus such as lack of physical activity, obesity, smoking, and poor nutrition. While treatment of some musculoskeletal disorders includes surgical and pharmacological intervention, it may also be managed in primary care by integrating self-management support and non-pharmacological interventions such as exercise, weight control, and psychological therapies (2). Pain and reduced mobility are the fusing characteristics of musculoskeletal disorders which usually constant in long-term circumstances. Joint deformity and deterioration of bone density can occur, where early diagnosis and treatment may not be available.

The novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) global pandemic causing many countries in the world lockdown to break the chain of infection. These decisions affecting not only physical health but also mental well-being, particularly those who are regularly performing physical activities. The World Health Organization (WHO) recognises the new normal as the COVID-19 pandemic remains in the community (3). Everyone needs to work together to protect ourselves and surrounding people by taking several measures. Avoiding crowded spots and locations, close-contact settings, confined and enclosed areas are important in breaking the chain of infection. Furthermore, the community is required to practice frequent handwashing, physical distancing, while promoting coughs and sneezes etiquette.

Due to the lockdown, community participation and programme are interrupted by many people. Daily physical activity affecting many people as we have to stay at home and do all activities inside our areas. 'Over-staying' at home may lead to worry,

fear, uncertainty, and psychological pain for some people. Home-based activities such as body weight, aerobic exercise, and stretching could replace the outdoor activities while many internet-based physical activities such as active gaming were reported to be helpful (4). A good opportunity for people to stay fit and healthy by performing simple and do-able activities though at home. Based on WHO recommendation of physical activity, adults and older people (aged more than 17 years), required 75 min/week along with aerobic exercise vigorously or 150 min/week of moderate aerobic intensity, including twice-weekly strengthening of bone and muscle (5).

For a person with musculoskeletal problems characterised by pain, restriction of movement, functional ability, and dexterity, performing prescribed activities by healthcare professionals at home requires a change in the strategies and methods. Maintaining optimal musculoskeletal health is crucial to avoid falls, and subsequently fractures among older people, with a lack of physical activity due to this current situation (6). For instance, older people living with knee osteoarthritis and osteoporosis, home-based individual exercises and daily physical activities could be continuously done with minimal contact with the healthcare professionals. It is essential to increase the efforts to improve the current management of bone and muscle health among people with musculoskeletal disorders and attempt to reinstate the ability to function and promoting a better quality of life for all.

Thus, it is hoped to prevent from musculoskeletal disorders to the bones (e.g. osteoporosis), joints (e.g. osteoarthritis, gout, rheumatoid arthritis), muscles (e.g. sarcopenia), or spine (e.g. back pain). These conditions could comprise of various diagnoses such as fractures, sprains, and strains. Promoting good conditions of the musculoskeletal system requires not only a good intake of nutrition (e.g. calcium for bone tissue, vitamin D for the calcium absorption) (7) but also involves movements of the system through exercise and

physical activities (8). Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, almost everyone is obliged to stay at home or abide by the quarantine procedure to prevent the virus from being transmitted. Some of the clinical services affected by COVID-19 are also temporarily closed or reducing the number of attendees. Thus, it is recommended that people remain active by practising exercise or other active physical activities at home, depending upon individual ability. Nonetheless, various modes of practice may be used for this reason, including muscle strengthening and aerobic exercise. Thus, the muscles, bones, joints, associated tissues such as ligaments and tendons could be well preserved within the new normal.

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