HYPERMOBILITY GUIDE

SPECIALISTPILATESONLINE.COM

WHAT IS JOINT HYPERMOBILITY?

Hypermobility means that you can move your joints more than other people can.

Hypermobile people will frequently rest at the end of their joint range (E.g. twisted up arm, leg or body positions when sitting, standing or lying). This can result in:

- poor posture
- overall decrease in muscle strength, endurance and deconditioning.

The resulting stress and strain through collagenous tissue weakens and damages structures causing pain and discomfort. Microtrauma to ligament structures in your body (such as in your ankles, below your knee caps, in your hip area, elbows, shoulders or back region (in the dimples of your lower back) may also occur.

HYPERMOBILITY GUIDE

SPECIALISTPILATESONLINE.COM

HYPERMOBILITY: COMMON COMPLAINTS

- Symptoms can progress over time
- Widespread symptoms and long lasting (lasting 15-45 days)
- Symptoms often misdiagnosed or not identified
- People with hypermobility stretch to try and relieve symptoms with no long term improvement leading to frustration and poor management of symptoms
- People with hypermobility gravitate towards yoga-type exercises involving extreme stretching to end of joint ranges, rather than much needed close chain, stability, balance and functional rehabilitation exercises such as our Specialist Pilates exercises for hypermobility.
- Hypermobile patients have often tried all resorts to try and relieve symptoms: Trying and failing to find the correct chair, pillow, sleeping position
- Struggling with impact or agility type exercise routines leading to regular flare ups.

HYPERMOBILITY GUIDE

SPECIALISTPILATESONLINE.COM

TEST YOURSELF

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU ARE HYPERMOBILE?

5 Quick things you can ask yourself

- Is there a family history of increased flexibility (hypermobility)?
- As a child or adult do you sit in curled up positions, cross your legs or comfortably do the splits with ease compared to others?
- As a child or teenager have you dislocated your knee cap or shoulder on at least one or more occasions?
- Do you sleep with your wrists bent up and curled up tight or in awkward postures compared to your partner?
- Do your joints dislocate easily without trauma involved?

If you have answered yes to any of the above, now try the joint test on the next page.

HYPERMOBILITY GUIDE

SPECIALISTPILATESONLINE.COM

QUICK JOINT TEST

BEIGHTON SCALE: HOW FLEXIBLE IN YOUR JOINTS ARE YOU?

Movement	Score	
Bending the wrist forwards, can you touch your thumb to the forearm?	1 point R side	1 point L side
Does your 5th finger (little finger) extend backwards to 90 degrees?	1 point R side	1 point L side
Do your elbows extend past horizontal when you straighten the arm out to the side of your body?	1 point R side	1 point L side
In standing, do your knees hyperextend backwards (bow backwards) when you stand and push your knees backwards?	1 point R side	1 point L side
Are you able to bend forwards and touch the palms of the hands flat to the floor without bending the knees?	1 point per movement	
Total Score (out of 9)		

(Ref: Beighton Scale, Hypermobility and Ehlers Danlos Society)

Answers

Add up your score from the table above.

Score 4 out of 9 or higher?
You are classed as being hypermobile in your joints.

Score under 4 and you are very unlikely to be hypermobile

HYPERMOBILITY GUIDE

SPECIALISTPILATESONLINE.COM

IF YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED ANY OF THE FOLLOWING FROM THE LIST BELOW, YOU INCREASE THE DEGREE TO WHICH YOU ARE AFFECTED BY HYPERMOBILITY:

Hernia's
Varicose veins
Uterine/rectal prolapses
Drooping eyelids
Dry eyes
Paper thin scars or lots of stretch marks
Flat feet
History of dislocations or subluxations
Childhood growing pains
Hip dysplasia
Postural tachycardia (light headedness with increase in pulse rate)
Ability to touch nose with tongue (Gorlin's sign)
Chronic pain
Fatigue Fainting (known as syncope)
Paresthesia (tingling)
Poor balance
Clumsiness
Poor response to Non Steroidal Anti-Inflammatories (NSAIDs)
Joint pains for 3 or more months (Polyarthralgia)
Abnormal scarring
Poor sleep

HYPERMOBILITY GUIDE

SPECIALISTPILATESONLINE.COM

CAN HYPERMOBILITY RUN IN FAMILIES?

Yes. Perhaps ask other members of your family if they have experienced any of the issues listed in this guide because it is likely that a parent or someone in your family may also have elements of hypermobility and could benefit from our videos too.

TOP TIPS FOR EXERCISING WHEN YOU ARE HYPERMOBILE

Stretching is important but NOT to the extremes you are used to; even though you will want to! Stretching is still important to maintain length in your muscles and has been shown to be beneficial in creating enhanced vagal modulation (effects of vagal nerve activity on the rate of the heart's contraction, something very important for hypermobile patients). However, you want to aim at stretching in a much smaller range to avoid going to the very end of your joint range where you could irritate and damage soft tissue structures that can lead to pain.

HYPERMOBILITY GUIDE

SPECIALISTPILATESONLINE.COM

TOP TIPS FOR EXERCISING WHEN YOU ARE HYPERMOBILE

- Avoid bowing (hyperextending) at your elbows and knees when exercising.
- Keep movements small and with good control.
- If using hand weights be careful to keep your wrists straight and don't let your wrists bend backwards. If you struggle to keep your wrists straight, the weight you are using is likely to be too heavy for you.
- Stand straight with your weight evenly balanced, do not hip hitch!
- When performing chair or sitting exercises try not to slump! Sit tall.
- If pain levels are high, start exercising in non weight bearing positions first, then progress to standing and functional positions.
- Build up resistance and repetitions slowly over time to improve strength and avoid flare ups.
- Use wobble cushions, gym balls and balance boards to challenge your body whilst exercising.

HYPERMOBILITY GUIDE

SPECIALISTPILATESONLINE.COM

AIMS OF EXERCISES

1. Have better control of hypermobile areas.
2. Keep mobile in those less mobile joints areas of your body.
3. Improve joint control.
4. Gain better body awareness.
5. Achieve a neutral spine positions.
6. Recruit your abdominal and spinal muscles effectively.
7. Improve balance and overall stability.
8. Apply the Pilates concepts to functional tasks such as housework, travelling and work!

AND FINALLY...

Remember, it won't happen overnight, it will take several weeks or even months of regular practice (or as long as your body needs) to build up the correct strength to prevent ongoing problems. As soon as your strength and core control improves, pain will subside considerably!

Follow our range of hypermobile videos online starting with beginner level classes and working through to advanced level classes over time to help you live better with hypermobility and prevent pain episodes. Keeping up your practice will help keep symptoms at bay.

@SPOVIDEOS FACEBOOK.COM/SPOVIDEO @SPOVIDEOS

A RIBBON HEALTH LTD PRODUCT

HYPERMOBILITY GUIDE

SPECIALISTPILATESONLINE.COM

AUTHORS

This guide has been written by our Specialist Pilates Online Physiotherapists based on their clinical experience, specialist background, and Masters level training.

Beighton scale and validated tests for Hypermobility adapted with thanks from:

Grahame R, Bird HA, Child A. The revised (Brighton 1998) criteria for the diagnosis of benign joint hypermobility syndrome (BJHS). J Rheumatol. 2000;27(7):1777-1779. 27.

Hakim AJ, Grahame R. A simple questionnaire to detect hypermobility: an adjunct to the assessment of patients with diffuse musculoskeletal pain. Int J Clin Pract. 2003;57(3):163-166.