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LIFESTYLE

Weight loss may protect knees

Degeneration of knee cartilage in obese people can be slowed

OBESE PEOPLE WHO lose a substantial amount of weight can significantly slow the degeneration of their knee cartilage, according to a new study. Obesity is a major risk factor for osteoarthritis, a degenerative joint disease.

"Degenerative joint disease is a major cause of pain and disability in our population, and obesity is a significant risk factor," said the study's lead author Alexandra Gersing from University of California-San Francisco.

Gersing and colleagues investigated the association between different degrees of weight loss and the progression of knee cartilage degeneration in 506 overweight and obese patients. The

patients either had mild to moderate osteoarthritis or risk factors for the disease.

They were divided into three groups: a control group who did not lose weight, a second group who lost a little weight, and a third group who lost more than 10 per cent of their body weight. When the researchers analysed differences in the quality of cartilage among the three groups over a four-year time span, they found evidence that weight loss has a protective effect against cartilage degeneration and that a larger amount of weight loss is more beneficial.

"Cartilage degenerated a lot slower in the group that lost more than 10 per cent of their body weight, especially in the weight-bearing regions of the knee," Gersing said.

However, those with



five to 10 per cent weight loss had almost no difference in cartilage degeneration compared to those who did not lose weight, the study found. "Substantial weight loss not only slows knee joint degen-

eration, it also reduces the risk of developing osteoarthritis," Gersing said.

The study was presented at the annual meeting of the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA). IANS

Winter-proof your hair

These tips will combat the season's dryness

FROM FRIZZY HAIR to split-ends, winter can get harsh on your hair. Keep hot water away from it and opt for safe styling methods to let your hair stay healthy even when the temperature takes a dip.

Daniel Bauer, TRESemme's official hair expert, suggests ways to combat winter dryness:

• **Keep hair washing to a minimum:** There has never been a defined answer to how often

one should wash their hair as it all depends on your hair type and styling choices. But washing your hair too often in the winters will remove the natural oils secreted by your hair, leaving them dry and prone to breakage. So make sure you don't wash your hair too often. Also, it's best to use products that tame frizz.

• **Conditioning is the key:** So many people deal with rough hair due to the sudden weather change mixed with harsh winter winds. A good conditioner will lock in all the moisture in to your hair and keep it clean and nourished. A good tip is to not rinse out your conditioner completely if you have thick hair. For people with fine hair, you should just leave in a little bit of conditioner on the tips.

• **Say no to hot water show-**

ers: A 30-minute-long hot shower may feel great on a cold winter morning, but it will most definitely strip your hair of all moisture. Instead, wash your hair with lukewarm water and finish off with cold water right at the end. This will help close and seal the hair cuticles.

• **Safe styling:** Since your hair is already prone to some damage in winters, ensure all other processes are smooth and hassle-free. Use a strengthening shampoo that nourishes the hair and forms a protective shield, allowing it to withstand the potential damage due to heat styling tools and frequent brushing. Opt for loose styles such as fishtail braids or a messy bun that are winter-friendly and can be easily created at home. IANS



ALIGN YOUR LIFE

Express Yourself

Many women these days develop thyroid malfunction at an early age. With each passing year more and more cases are coming into light. Recent studies show that women are more affected by the malfunction of the thyroid gland than men. Majority of women develop this disorder in their later thirties and early forties. The classic symptoms are depression, dry skin and mood swings. It's hard to detect as it goes unnoticed easily. So many women suffer for years before they discover what is actually wrong with them.

The thyroid gland is a butterfly-shaped organ located in the base of your neck. It releases hormones that control metabolism - the way your body uses energy. The thyroid's hormones regulate vital body functions, such as breathing, heart rate, body weight, and muscle strength and cholesterol levels. Malfunction in this gland can create chaos in your life physically and emotionally.

But if you look at this disorder from a deeper perspective, it's connected to your throat chakra. This chakra is located within the throat and is responsible for communication, self-expression and creativity. It also controls all the functions of the throat and the energy within your throat. Long term imbalance in this chakra is known to affect your thyroid gland.

The throat chakra being the seat of communication and self-expression; is responsible for how you perceive the world and express yourself. Anytime this expression is stifled or rejected the energy in the throat chakra gets affected. For example most children suffer from cough and cold issues. Some even develop throat related issues at a very young age. The way a child communicates and expresses himself has a lot to do with his throat chakra. The more you tell your children to be less creative and less expressive, the more they are likely to develop throat related illnesses.

So if you are suffering from thyroid malfunction, ask yourself - am I expressing myself enough? Is my creativity curbed? Do I feel that no one understands what I am saying or how I feel?

No matter how bad the problem is, your answer lies in balancing your throat chakra through expressing yourself, practicing meditation, and yoga.

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