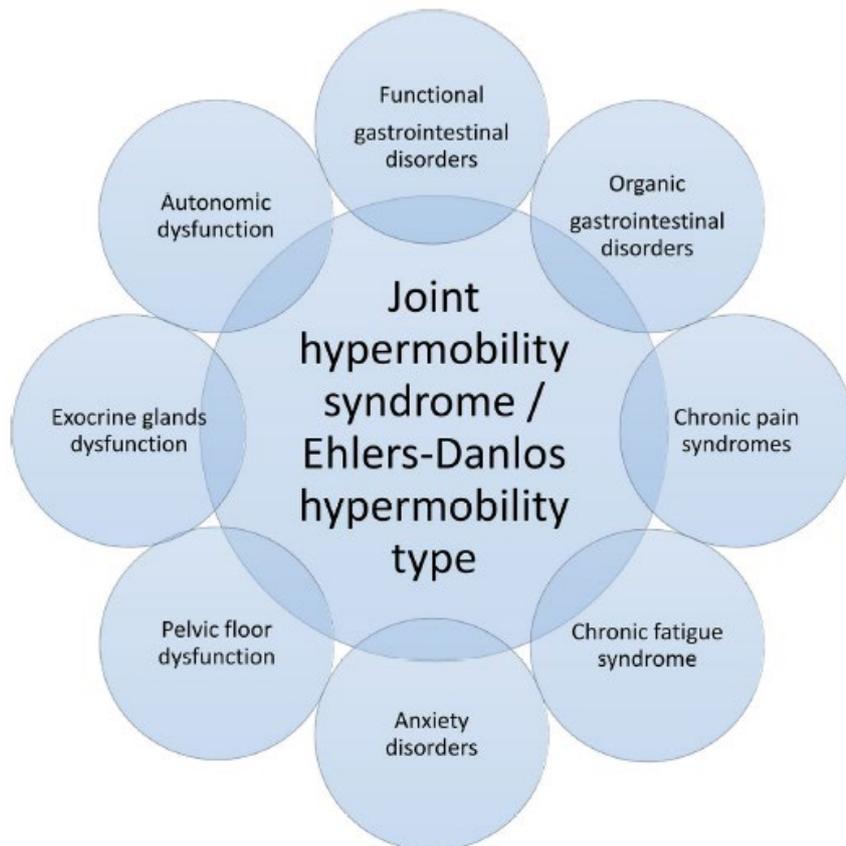


## Hypermobility

### What is Hypermobility

The joint hypermobility syndrome is a condition that features joints that easily move beyond the normal range expected for that particular joint.

- Hypermobile joints tend to be inherited.
- Often joint hypermobility causes no symptoms and requires no treatment, therefore considered a benign condition.
- Treatments are customized for each individual based on his or her particular manifestations.
- It is estimated that 10%-15% of normal children have hypermobile joints
- Women are more likely than men to have hypermobile joints.
- Hypermobile joints are sometimes referred to as “loose joints,” and those affected are referred to as being “double jointed.”
- Joint hypermobility tends to decrease with aging as we become naturally less flexible.
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## **What are the symptoms**

The most frequent symptom is pain. This usually happens after hard physical work or exercise.

- Pain and stiffness in the joints and muscles
- Clicking joints
- Joints that dislocate (come out of the correct position) easily
- Fatigue (extreme tiredness)

Recurrent injuries – such as sprains

- Digestive problems – such as constipation and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- Dizziness and fainting
- Thin or stretchy skin
- Backpain due to spondylolisthesis.

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## **What causes Hypermobility**

Weak or stretched ligaments

The shape of your bones – If the socket part of your hip or shoulder joint is particularly shallow, the range of movement in that joint will be greater than usual and there'll also be a greater chance of dislocation.

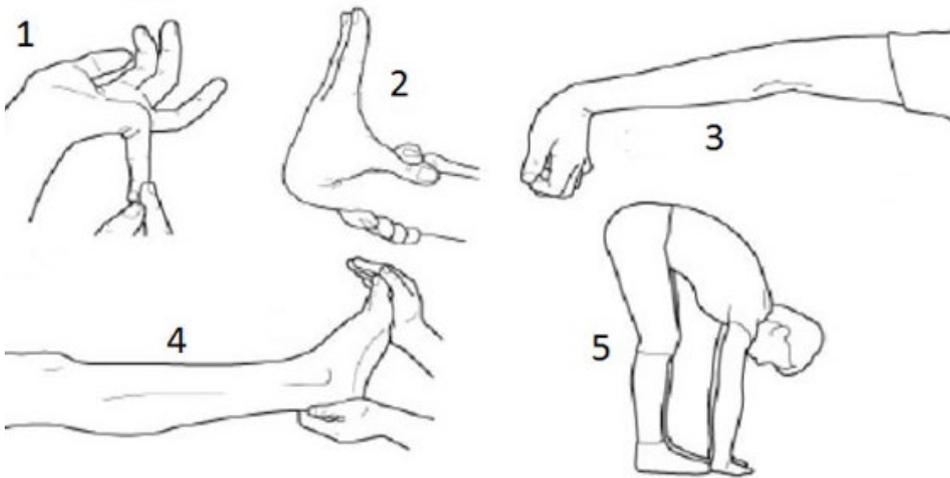
Muscle tone – The more relaxed your muscles are, the more movement you'll have in your joints.

Sense of joint movement (proprioception) – Some people find it difficult to sense the position of a joint without being able to see it.

## **How is it diagnosed**

The Beighton score is a popular screening technique for hypermobility.

A high Beighton score means that you're hypermobile but it doesn't mean you have joint hypermobility syndrome.



One point is assigned for the ability to accomplish each of the following movements:

1. Bending your small finger back further than 90 degrees (1 point each side)
2. Bending your elbow beyond a straight line (1 point each side)
3. Bending your knee beyond a straight line (1 point each side)
4. Putting your palms flat on the floor without bending your knees (1 point)
5. Bending your thumb back to touch the front of your forearm (1 point each side)

If you score 4 or more in the tests and have had joint pains (arthralgia) in four or more joints for longer than 3 months then it is likely that you have hypermobility, but you should still consult your doctor to determine whether hypermobility is the cause of the symptoms in your joints, or whether something else is causing the pain.

## **Treatment options**

The aim of treatment is to reduce your symptoms, not to make you less hypermobile.

- Exercise - gentle exercises to strengthen and condition the muscles around the joints which are particularly supple.
- These exercises may be against weights. Wearing a splint or a firm elasticated bandage over the supple joint to protect against dislocation.
- Occupational therapists or physiotherapists can advise on exercises to do.
- Analgesia- Paracetamol, Tramadol, Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) such as ibuprofen may be better.
- Have warm baths.
- Use hot water bottles.
- Use heat-rub cream.
- In general, you should avoid surgery if possible (supple tissue does not heal quickly).
- Swimming can help, where the weight of the body is supported by water, and so can cycling.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Diet and nutrition -There's no specific diet to help joint hypermobility, but we'd recommend a balanced diet to keep your weight under control and for your general health.
- Buy good, firm shoes.
- If you have flat feet, use special insoles (support arches) in shoes (podiatrist can assist).
- Do not do high-impact exercise.
- Do not over exercise.
- Do not grip things too tightly.
- Do not overextend your joints just because you can.

## References

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