

# Assessing Hip & Knee Arthritis: A GP's Guide



SCAN TO READ MORE

A practical clinical guide for GPs on recognising hip and knee osteoarthritis — from the subtle early history points through to examination findings, imaging, and knowing when to refer. Understanding the key differences between hip and knee presentations, and between subtypes within each joint, is essential for timely diagnosis and appropriate management.

## ASSESSMENT

### 01 Hip History

Groin pain, shoes & socks difficulty, obligate external rotation, car entry modification.

### 02 Hip Examination

Loss of internal rotation, leg length change, pelvic tilt. AP pelvis centred on symphysis.

### 03 Knee History

Limp, difficulty descending stairs, giving-way sensation, externally rotated gait.

### 04 Knee Examination

Fixed flexion deformity, Baker's cyst, alignment assessment. Weight-bearing X-rays required.

### 05 Referral

HealthLink or online contact form. Include X-rays, comorbidities, BMI, and medication list.

## AT A GLANCE

### HIP PAIN

Groin (Most Common)

### VARUS KNEE

70% of Cases

### VALGUS KNEE

20% of Cases

### PFJ ARTHRITIS

10% of Cases

**"Groin pain and loss of internal rotation are the two most reliable signs of hip arthritis."**

— Dr Chien-Wen Liew

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Q. My patient has lateral hip pain — is this hip arthritis?

Isolated lateral pain without groin pain suggests trochanteric bursitis or gluteal tendinopathy rather than intra-articular OA. Groin pain with loss of internal rotation points to the hip joint.

### Q. Which knee X-ray views should I request?

Weight-bearing AP, lateral and skyline views. A supine AP underestimates joint space loss. If X-rays are normal with significant symptoms, request an MRI to evaluate meniscal pathology.

### Q. When should I refer to a specialist?

Refer when non-operative measures have failed, X-rays show moderate to severe OA with functional limitation, or there is progressive deformity or concern about falls and loss of independence.

## ABOUT THE SURGEON

Dr Chien-Wen Liew exclusively performs total hip replacements via the direct anterior approach and total knee replacements via kinematic alignment only. He utilises patient-specific technology for both procedures, and practices from Orthopaedics 360 — within the Eastwood Private Hospital Precinct.

Dr Chien-Wen Liew

Hip and Knee Replacement Surgeon

Orthopaedics 360 · Eastwood Private Hospital, Adelaide SA

General educational purposes only. AHPRA Registered Specialist.