# Chapter 40
## Joint pain

### Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>P</th>
<th>MP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate introduction</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confirms patient’s name and age</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explains reason for consultation</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obtains consent</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open question to elicit presenting complaint</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allows patient to open up, listens carefully, remains silent and does not interrupt the patient</td>
<td>✔</td>
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**Signposts:** e.g. "Mr Gregory, thank you for telling me about this problem. I would like to ask a few more detailed questions. Is that all right?"

### History of presenting complaint:
- **Site:**
  - Which joints specifically
  - Small/large joints
  - Symmetrical
  - Proximal/distal
- **Onset:**
  - Trauma
  - Injection
  - Chronic/gradual
  - Acute, severely painful (septic, gout, fracture)
  - Radiation
- **Time:**
  - Duration of joint pain
  - Intermittent, continuous, progressive (raised intracranial pressure)
- **Alleviating factors:**
  - Movement (inflammatory)
- **Exacerbating factors:**
  - Movement (mechanical/degenerative)
  - Worse in morning (inflammatory)
  - Severity (excruciating pain with complete immobility: ? septic arthritis)
- **Limitation of movement/activity**
- **Morning stiffness:** duration of morning stiffness – an easily forgotten point
- **Redness, swelling (gout, septic arthritis)**
- **Locking (cartilage injury), giving way (ligament injury)**
- **Fever**
- **Asks if patient is suffering from any other symptoms**
- **Asks about any recent illnesses**
- **Previous history of joint pains**

### Associated symptoms/review of symptoms:

#### Skin:
- Erythematous patches with silver scaly patches (psoriasis)
- Butterfly rash (SLE)
- Nodules, calcinosis (CREST)
- Raynaud’s syndrome (CREST)
- Skin tightness (CREST)
- Dry mouth (Sjögren’s syndrome)

#### Nails:
- Pitting, onycholysis (psoriasis)

#### Eyes:
- Pain (anterior uveitis in ankylosing spondylitis), dry eyes (Sjögren’s syndrome)

#### Heart:
- Pain (pericarditis)

#### Lungs:
- Cough (sarcoid, fibrosis), shortness of breath (pulmonary fibrosis), pleuritic pain (pleurisy)

#### Gastrointestinal:
- Diarrhoea (Reiter’s syndrome), bloody diarrhoea (inflammatory bowel disease)

#### Renal:
- Haematuria, ankle swelling (nephritis)

#### Peripheral nervous system:
- Sensory disturbances, motor weakness (mononeuritis multiplex)
- Pain, tingling, numbness in the first 3.5 fingers (carpal tunnel syndrome)

#### Central nervous system:
- Nerve palsies

#### Genitourinary:
- Urethritis, ulcers, discharge, dysuria (Reiter’s syndrome)

#### 'Red flags':
- Weight loss, night sweats

#### Past medical history:
- Traumatic injury, fractures
- Recent joint injection (septic arthritis)
- Joint surgery
- Cancer
- Osteoporosis
- Autoimmune conditions: inflammatory bowel disease, glomerulonephritis, psoriasis, Sjögren’s syndrome
- Osteoarthritis
- Diabetes (pseudogout, septic arthritis)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family history:</th>
<th>Use of non-verbal cues, e.g. good eye contact, nodding head and good body posture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Rheumatoid arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis, inflammatory arthropathy</td>
<td>Systematic approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Osteoporosis</td>
<td>Explores and responds to ICE:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Osteoarthritis</td>
<td>• Ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cancer</td>
<td>• Concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug history:</td>
<td>• Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Long-term steroids (osteoarthritis)</td>
<td>Shows empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Thiazide diuretics (gout)</td>
<td>Non-verbal skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• NSAIDs (gout)</td>
<td>Avoids technical jargon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Over-the-counter medication</td>
<td>Devises holistic management plan and addresses psychosocial issues as well as medical problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allergies</td>
<td>Summarises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social history:</td>
<td>Offers to answer any questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Occupation</td>
<td>Thanks patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Manual labour, lifting (osteoarthritis)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>