

FINGER OSTEOARTHRITIS

In primary osteoarthritis of the hand the distal interphalangeal joint (DIPJ) is the most commonly affected, followed by the proximal interphalangeal joint (PIPJ) with the least commonly affected being the metacarpophalangeal joint (MCPJ). The condition develops gradually with advancing age, although it is sometimes seen in the younger population.

Radiographic changes of OA in the hand are similar to other joints and include joint space narrowing, subchondral sclerosis, cysts and osteophytes.



The x-ray shows arthritis developing at varying stages in the PIPJ and DIPJ of the index and middle fingers. The most advanced changes are present at the DIPJ of the middle finger with large lateral osteophytes and joint space destruction.

Kellgren and Lawrence described a classification system of joint OA published in 1957. It is applicable to finger OA and is based on the radiological findings of PA x-rays of both hands.

Grade	Description	Features
0	No OA	No radiological features.
1	Doubtful OA	Osteophytes with doubtful significance.
2	Minimal OA	Definite OA with unpaired joint space.
3	Moderate OA	Moderate joint space loss.
4	Severe OA	Significant joint space loss with subchondral sclerosis.

The table below shows example x-rays of the Kellgren Lawrence scale in the PIP joint of the fingers.

