

# Ligamentous Laxity / Hyper mobile joints

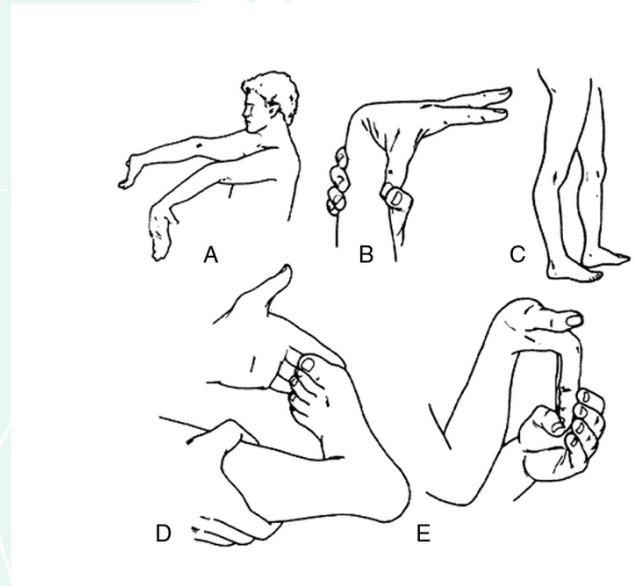
Ligamentous laxity or double-jointedness is a lifelong condition. Which means it needs lifelong habits to counteract the symptoms. The diagram shows typical positions that hyper-mobile people can achieve, in excess of what "normal" people can achieve. Typically, joints are mobile such that they have an increased range of motion and can almost partially dislocate themselves. As such, after repeated trauma they start to get painful. This is dependent on how many times they *sublux* (partially dislocate) - this can be related to sporting activities or normal use with work / chores. Patients usually seek medical attention once they are painful.

Hyper-mobile joints can move into positions that allow a bigger build up of power into a stroke - such as swimming, bowling at cricket or serving at tennis. This renders the athlete super strong but the risk with repeated dropping into a partially dislocated position, that the joint can wear out. Also, if the athlete can't train due to pain they get weak muscles which then can't manage the loose joint.

Also, some patients can do trick movements - such as dislocate their shoulders or fingers or knees and while initially they are able to do them without pain, at some point they will become painful.

## Treatment

The best treatment option is always activity / habit modification by the patient. The first step therefore is to build strength around the affected joint. This should be done slowly, within the confines of a 'normal' range of motion and can be supervised by a physiotherapist or exercise physiologist. The muscles then act as a protective restriction



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to joint movement and can also contract reflexively as the joint starts to dislocate to prevent it from going out too far.

Surgical treatment is effective in restricting range of motion, however the repairs tend to stretch out. This is partly related to the fact that the collagen (building block protein of all ligaments, muscles and tendons) is already prone to loosening and the patient may feel uncomfortable with a 'tight' joint and they may tend to stretch it back to what feels normal for them. As such, surgery removes their super power! It's important to think clearly about surgery and sporting outcomes and make a long term decision.

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