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Author(s)	Sabashi, Kento; Kasahara, Satoshi; Tohyama, Harukazu; Chiba, Takeshi; Koshino, Yuta; Ishida, Tomoya; Samukawa, Mina; Yamanaka, Masanori
Citation	Journal of Back and Musculoskeletal Rehabilitation, 35(3), 565-572 https://doi.org/10.3233/BMR-200337
Issue Date	2022-05-11
Doc URL	http://hdl.handle.net/2115/86241
Rights	The final publication is available at IOS Press through https://dx.doi.org/10.3233/BMR-200337
Type	article (author version)
File Information	Kasahara202207.pdf



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3 Changes in postural control strategy during quiet standing in individuals with knee
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5

6 **Authors:**

7 Kento Sabashi^{1,2}, Satoshi Kasahara¹, Harukazu Tohyama¹, Takeshi Chiba^{1,2}, Yuta Koshino¹,
8 Tomoya Ishida¹, Mina Samukawa¹, Masanori Yamanaka³

9 ¹ Faculty of Health Sciences, Hokkaido University, Kita 12, Nishi 5, Kita-ku, Sapporo,
10 Hokkaido, 060-0812, Japan.

11 ² Department of Rehabilitation, Hokkaido University Hospital, Kita 14, Nishi 5, Kita-ku,
12 Sapporo, Hokkaido, 060-8648, Japan.

13 ³ Faculty of Health Science, Hokkaido Chitose College of Rehabilitation, Satomi 2-10,
14 Chitose, Hokkaido, 066-0055, Japan.

15

16 **Corresponding author:**

17 Satoshi Kasahara, PT, PhD

18 Department of Rehabilitation Science, Faculty of Health Sciences, Hokkaido University

19 Kita 12, Nishi 5, Kita-ku, Sapporo, Hokkaido, 060-0812, Japan

20 Tel/Fax: +81-11-706-3390

21 E-mail: kasahara@hs.hokudai.ac.jp

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26 **Abstract.**

27 **BACKGROUND:** Knee osteoarthritis (OA) impairs postural control, which may be affected
28 by how to use lower limb joints.

29 **OBJECTIVE:** To investigate how individuals with knee OA use lower limb joints for static
30 postural control.

31 **METHODS:** Ten patients with knee OA and thirteen healthy controls performed quiet
32 standing for 30 s. The standard deviation of the center of mass (COM) and lower limb joint
33 motions in the anterior-posterior (AP) and medial-lateral (ML) planes were calculated from
34 three-dimensional marker trajectories. Pearson's correlation analysis and independent *t*-tests
35 were conducted to investigate the relationship between COM and lower limb joint motions
36 and to compare group difference, respectively.

37 **RESULTS:** The AP hip angular velocity alone in the knee OA group and the AP hip and
38 knee angular velocity in the control group were significantly correlated with the AP COM
39 velocity. The ML hip angular velocity was significantly correlated with the ML COM
40 velocity in both groups. The knee OA group exhibited a significantly larger standard
41 deviation of AP COM velocity than the control group.

42 **CONCLUSIONS:** Individuals with knee OA depended solely on the contribution of the hip
43 to the AP COM velocity, which could not be successfully controlled by the knee.

44

45 **Keywords:**

46 Knee osteoarthritis, Quiet standing, Postural control, Center of mass, Kinematics

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51 **1. Introduction**

52 Osteoarthritis (OA) of the knee is substantially prevalent in the elderly [1,2]. Patients
53 with knee OA have knee pain [3], quadriceps weakness [4], limited knee range of motion [5],
54 impaired proprioception of the knee [6], and structural changes (e.g., knee malalignment and
55 cartilage degradation) [7]. Consequently, knee OA is considered one of the main causes that
56 limits activities of daily living [8], deteriorates the quality of life [9], and increases the
57 likelihood of falling [10]. The prevention of falls is a research priority in patients with knee
58 OA because falls may induce incident fractures [10–12].

59 Poor postural control in patients with knee OA is considered to increase the likelihood
60 of falling [13]. Patients with knee OA exhibit impairments in postural control, including
61 increased postural sway during quiet standing compared to healthy adults [14]. Previous
62 studies demonstrated that the amount of postural sway in this patient population is associated
63 with knee pain [15,16], severity of knee OA [17], and knee muscle strength [18]. For the
64 clinical assessment and rehabilitation of individuals with knee OA, it is important to
65 understand how these factors affect joint motion during postural control.

66 The goal of static postural control is to stabilize the center of mass (COM) within the
67 base of support. All joint motions, particularly those in the lower limbs, play a vital role in
68 postural control. In general, the maintenance of equilibrium in the anterior-posterior (AP) and
69 medial-lateral (ML) planes during quiet standing is mainly controlled by ankle and hip joint
70 motions [19,20], while a recent study showed that knee joint motion additionally contributes
71 to static postural control [21]. Individuals with knee OA have impaired hip and ankle joint
72 functions as well as knee joint functions [4–6,22–25]. However, it remains unknown whether
73 the use of lower limb joints for postural control in this patient population differs from that in
74 healthy adults. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the changes in postural
75 control strategies during quiet standing in individuals with knee OA. We hypothesized that

76 the lower limb joint motions used to control the COM motion were different between
77 individuals with knee OA and age-matched healthy controls.

78

79 **2. Methods**

80 This study was a case-control type investigation. We received ethical approval from
81 the Institutional Review Board of our institute, and written informed consent was obtained
82 from all participants.

83

84 *2.1. Participants*

85 Twenty-three participants, ten individuals diagnosed with unilateral or bilateral knee
86 OA (one male and nine females) and thirteen healthy controls (three male and ten females),
87 participated in this study (Table 1). Knee pain in patients with knee OA was assessed using a
88 visual analogue scale (VAS), which ranged from 0 (no pain) to 100 mm (severe pain), and the
89 average VAS score was 23.8 mm. All participants with and without knee OA were recruited
90 from several hospitals and local communities. *A priori* power analysis was conducted using
91 the t-test model of G*Power 3.1.9.2 (Kiel University, Kiel, Germany). Based on our pilot
92 study of knee angular velocity data with seven participants (three patients with knee OA and
93 four healthy controls), the minimum sample size for this study was 10 participants per group
94 (effect size = 1.39, alpha = 0.05, and power = 0.80).

95 Participants in the knee OA group were included if they were aged 50–79 years and
96 had radiographically diagnosed knee OA with a Kellgren–Lawrence grade 2–4 in at least one
97 knee [26]. Potential participants in both groups were excluded if they had any previous lower
98 limb or back surgery, severe disability in walking and standing without an assistive device,
99 any musculoskeletal disorder other than knee OA that would influence balance, or any
100 neurological disorder.

101

102 *2.2. Experimental protocol*

103 All participants were instructed to stand as still as possible and to keep looking
104 straight ahead with their feet hip-width apart and their arms folded across the chest. During
105 testing, participants were not provided with any information on body sway. The examination
106 was performed twice for 30 s.

107 All data were collected using a motion-capture system (Cortex; Motion Analysis
108 Corporation, Santa Rosa, CA, USA), which consisted of seven cameras (Hawk cameras;
109 Motion Analysis Corporation) with a sampling rate of 200 Hz. According to the modified
110 Helen Hayes marker set [27], 25 reflective markers were positioned at the following
111 anatomical landmarks: dorsum of the foot, heel, lateral and medial malleoli, lateral shank,
112 lateral and medial femoral epicondyle, lateral thigh, anterior superior iliac spine, sacral,
113 acromion, lateral humeral epicondyle, and wrist. All markers, except the sacral, were attached
114 bilaterally.

115

116 *2.3. Data analysis*

117 All signals were processed using a custom MATLAB program (MathWorks Inc.,
118 Natick, MA, USA). Three-dimensional marker trajectories were low-pass filtered at a cutoff
119 frequency of 5 Hz using a fourth-order Butterworth filter [28].

120 The time series of AP and ML COM positions were calculated from the marker data
121 based on previously reported anthropometric data [29]. The time series of AP and ML COM
122 velocities were calculated as the first-time derivatives of COM positions. The following
123 COM-based parameters in each direction were calculated to assess the amount of body sway
124 during quiet standing: (1) standard deviation (SD) of COM position and (2) SD of COM
125 velocity [20,30].

126 The time series of AP and ML hip, knee, and ankle angles were calculated using
127 Visual 3D software (C-Motion Inc., Germantown, MD, USA). Subsequently, the time series
128 of AP and ML angular velocities were calculated as the first-time derivatives of each lower
129 limb joint angle. Knee joint motion analysis in the ML plane, or knee adduction-abduction,
130 was excluded based on the method presented in [31]. Additionally, the following kinematic
131 parameters in each direction were calculated to assess the amount of lower limb joint motions
132 during quiet standing: (1) SD of lower limb joint angle and (2) SD of lower limb joint angular
133 velocity [20]. The affected limb in patients with unilateral knee OA, the most affected limb in
134 patients with bilateral knee OA, and a randomly selected limb in healthy controls were
135 adopted in this study.

136 To compare the differences in standing posture, the mean values of COM positions
137 and lower limb joint angles during static standing were calculated. The mean values of COM
138 positions were defined as the distance from the midpoint of the bilateral heel markers in the
139 AP and ML planes. The mean values of COM positions in the AP plane were expressed as
140 positive if the COM position was anterior relative to the midpoint of the bilateral heel
141 markers, while those in the ML plane were expressed as positive if the COM position was in
142 the direction of the study limb relative to the midpoint of the bilateral heel markers. In
143 addition, lower limb joint angles in the AP plane were represented as positive for flexion
144 (dorsiflexion), while those in the ML plane were represented as positive for adduction
145 (inversion).

146

147 *2.4. Statistical analysis*

148 An independent *t*-test was used to compare the demographic data, the mean values of
149 COM positions, the mean values of lower limb joint angles, the SDs of COM position and
150 velocity, and the SDs of lower limb joint angles and angular velocities between the groups.

151 Then, the mean difference (the knee OA group minus the control group) and 95% confidence
152 interval (CI) for each variable was calculated. Pearson's product correlation analysis was
153 performed to investigate the relationship between lower limb joint motion and COM motion
154 in the AP and ML planes in each group. In addition, Pearson's product correlation analysis
155 was carried out to investigate the associations of the amount of body sway and lower limb
156 joint motions with knee pain in patients with knee OA. The statistical significance level was
157 set at $P < 0.05$. All statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version
158 26.0 (IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY, USA).

159

160 **3. Results**

161 The mean values of COM positions for the groups in the AP (mean difference = 4.91
162 mm, 95% CI = -6.85 to 16.67 mm, $P = 0.395$) and ML planes (mean difference = -0.95 mm,
163 95% CI = -7.02 to 5.12 mm, $P = 0.748$) did not change significantly. In addition, no
164 significant difference was found between the mean values of lower limb joint angles of
165 groups in the AP (hip: mean difference = -0.58° , 95% CI = -6.76 to 5.60° , $P = 0.847$; knee:
166 mean difference = 2.71° , 95% CI = -2.97 to 8.38° , $P = 0.332$; ankle: mean difference = 0.68° ,
167 95% CI = -2.92 to 4.28° , $P = 0.698$) and ML planes (hip: mean difference = -0.55° , 95% CI =
168 -2.66 to 1.57° , $P = 0.597$; ankle: mean difference = -2.43° , 95% CI = -8.21 to 3.35° , $P =$
169 0.391).

170 For the SD of AP and ML COM positions, there was no significant difference between
171 the groups (AP: mean difference = 0.06 mm, 95% CI = -0.91 to 1.02 mm, $P = 0.903$; ML:
172 mean difference = 0.51 mm, 95% CI = -0.14 to 1.16 mm, $P = 0.115$) (Fig. 1a). The SD of AP
173 COM velocity was significantly larger in the knee OA group than that of the control group
174 (mean difference = 0.79 mm/s, 95% CI = 0.24 to 1.35 mm/s, $P = 0.007$). Furthermore, there
175 was no significant difference in the ML COM velocity of groups (mean difference = 0.18

176 mm/s, 95% CI = -0.27 to 0.63 mm/s, $P = 0.408$) (Fig. 1b).

177 For the SD of lower limb joint angles in the AP plane, there was no significant
178 difference between the groups (hip: mean difference = 0.06° , 95% CI = -0.09 to 0.20° , $P =$
179 0.433 ; knee: mean difference = 0.02° , 95% CI = -0.08 to 0.11° , $P = 0.705$; ankle: mean
180 difference = 0.03° , 95% CI = -0.03 to 0.09° , $P = 0.296$) (Fig. 2a). Regarding the ML plane,
181 the SD of hip angle was significantly larger in the knee OA group than that of the control
182 group (mean difference = 0.07° , 95% CI = 0.02 to 0.12° , $P = 0.007$). Moreover, the SD of
183 ankle angle was not significantly different between the groups (mean difference = 0.01° , 95%
184 CI = -0.08 to 0.09° , $P = 0.853$) (Fig. 2b). As for the lower limb joint angular velocities, the
185 SD of AP hip and knee angular velocities were significantly larger in the knee OA group than
186 those of the control group (hip: mean difference = $0.22^\circ/\text{s}$, 95% CI = 0.08 to $0.35^\circ/\text{s}$, $P =$
187 0.003 ; knee: mean difference = $0.17^\circ/\text{s}$, 95% CI = 0.04 to $0.30^\circ/\text{s}$, $P = 0.010$). In addition,
188 the SD of AP ankle angular velocity was not significantly different between groups (mean
189 difference = $0.04^\circ/\text{s}$, 95% CI = -0.06 to $0.15^\circ/\text{s}$, $P = 0.372$) (Fig. 3a). The SD of ML hip
190 angular velocity was significantly larger in the knee OA group than that of the control group
191 (mean difference = $0.16^\circ/\text{s}$, 95% CI = 0.02 to $0.31^\circ/\text{s}$, $P = 0.030$). Furthermore, the SD of
192 ML ankle angular velocity was not significantly different between groups (mean difference =
193 $-0.14^\circ/\text{s}$, 95% CI = -0.60 to $0.31^\circ/\text{s}$, $P = 0.523$) (Fig. 3b).

194 Pearson's correlation analysis showed that the SD of AP ankle angle was positively
195 correlated with the SD of AP COM position in both groups (OA: $r = 0.662$, $P = 0.037$;
196 control: $r = 0.777$, $P = 0.002$) (Table 2). In the knee OA group, the SD of ML hip angle was
197 positively correlated with the SD of ML COM position ($r = 0.925$, $P < 0.001$), whereas in the
198 control group, the SD of ML ankle angle was positively correlated with the SD of ML COM
199 position ($r = 0.726$, $P = 0.005$). The SD of AP hip angular velocity was positively correlated
200 with the SD of AP COM velocity in the knee OA group ($r = 0.644$, $P = 0.044$). In addition,

201 the SDs of AP hip and knee angular velocities were positively correlated with the SD of AP
202 COM velocity in the control group (hip: $r = 0.562$, $P = 0.046$; knee: $r = 0.673$, $P = 0.012$)
203 (Table 3). The SD of ML hip angular velocity was positively correlated with the SD of ML
204 COM velocity in both groups (OA: $r = 0.820$, $P = 0.004$; control: $r = 0.846$, $P < 0.001$).

205 In addition, there was no significant correlation between the SDs of COM and lower
206 limb joint motions and the VAS score for knee pain ($P = 0.092 - 0.966$) (Table 4).

207

208 **4. Discussion**

209 The current study revealed that the characteristics of the postural control strategy
210 during quiet standing in individuals with knee OA differed from those of age-matched healthy
211 adults. The knee OA group exhibited significantly larger SDs of AP COM velocity, ML hip
212 angle, AP hip angular velocity, AP knee angular velocity, and ML hip angular velocity than
213 the control group. The AP ankle angle was significantly correlated with the AP COM position
214 in both groups, while the ML hip angle and ML ankle angle were significantly correlated with
215 the ML COM position in the knee OA and control groups, respectively. In the knee OA
216 group, the AP hip angular velocity was significantly correlated with the AP COM velocity,
217 while in the control group, the AP hip and knee angular velocities were significantly
218 correlated. The ML hip angular velocity was significantly correlated with the ML COM
219 velocity in both groups.

220 Previous studies suggested that the amplitude of postural sway in the AP and ML
221 planes is generally controlled by ankle and hip joint motions [19,20]. In this study, the
222 amplitude of AP COM position was controlled by the ankle strategy in both groups, and there
223 was no significant difference in the amplitude of AP hip, knee, and ankle angles between the
224 groups. In other words, the postural control strategy for controlling the AP COM position may
225 be identical in both groups. The knee OA group used the hip strategy to control the amplitude

226 of ML COM position, whereas the control group used the ankle strategy. Furthermore, the
227 amplitude of ML hip angle of the knee OA group was larger than that of the control group;
228 however, there was no significant difference in the amplitude of ML ankle angles of the
229 groups. Compared with healthy adults, patients with knee OA have an impaired sense of
230 motion of the ankle joint in the ML plane; however not in the hip joint [25]. Those with knee
231 OA may be unable to adequately control the ML COM position with the ankle strategy.
232 Therefore, they may prefer to use the hip strategy to control the ML COM position.
233 Furthermore, the hip strategy has less COM motion than the ankle strategy even with the
234 same angle change because the center of rotation of hip joint is closer to the COM than that of
235 the ankle joint [32]. Therefore, the knee OA group may have required greater ML hip joint
236 motion than the control group.

237 It is believed that the hip strategy is preferable to the ankle strategy for fast COM
238 motion in postural control [33]. The hip strategy, which results in predominant hip joint
239 motion, includes thigh muscle activity that causes knee joint motion, although the muscles
240 around the ankle joint are extremely unresponsive [34]. As for the control of AP COM
241 velocity, the knee OA group used a postural control strategy using the hip joint alone, while
242 the control group used a mixed postural control strategy using the hip and knee joints. In other
243 words, the knee OA group depended only on the contribution of hip joint to the AP COM
244 velocity, while the control group depended on the contribution of hip and knee joints.
245 Therefore, the knee OA group exhibited increased body sway velocity and hip angular
246 velocity in the AP plane. In addition, the knee joint possibly cannot be used well to control
247 body sway velocity in the AP plane because the AP knee angular velocity in the knee OA
248 group was not correlated with the body sway velocity in the AP plane and was larger than that
249 of the control group. This may be affected by knee joint dysfunctions, such as quadriceps
250 weakness [4], limited knee range of motion [5], and impaired proprioception of the knee [6]

251 in patients with knee OA. Our study showed that it might be necessary to maintain hip joint
252 function and improve knee joint function for balance training in patients with knee OA. As for
253 the control of ML COM velocity, both groups used a postural control strategy using the hip
254 joint. Furthermore, the SD of hip angular velocity in the knee OA group was larger than that
255 of the control group, while there was no significant difference in the SD of ML COM velocity
256 for both groups. Postural sway velocity, such as the COM velocity, includes the direction and
257 position changes at the next moment. Therefore, this information is considered significant for
258 maintaining equilibrium [30,35]. The knee OA group may maintain postural stability because
259 of an increased sensory information resulting from an increased ML hip angular velocity to
260 compensate for an impaired sense of motion of the ankle joint in the ML plane.

261 Previous studies presented that knee pain was associated with postural sway in
262 patients with mild-to-severe knee OA whose VAS score for knee pain was greater than 30
263 mm [15,18]. However, in this study, knee pain did not correlate with the SDs of COM and
264 lower limb joint motions in patients with knee OA. This might be caused by mild knee pain
265 and mild-to-moderate knee OA in this study.

266 This study had several limitations. First, the participants in this study had mild-to-
267 moderate knee OA, and the average knee pain was less severe. The average knee pain in this
268 study may have been mild because of mild-to-moderate knee OA [9]. Therefore, the
269 participants in this study might not represent the overall characteristics of patients with knee
270 OA. Second, the task examined in this study was quiet standing, and results from dynamic
271 tasks, such as external perturbations, may differ from those in this study. Therefore, dynamic
272 tasks need to be investigated in the future. Third, we used three-dimensional motion analysis
273 to calculate the COM and lower limb joint motions. Measurement errors due to soft tissue
274 artifacts in three-dimensional motion analysis may have affected the results of quiet standing
275 performed in this study [36]. Finally, the number of participants in this study was limited.

276 Further studies with a large number of participants are needed to take into account the
277 severity of knee OA and knee pain.

278

279 **5. Conclusions**

280 We investigated the alterations in the postural control strategies during quiet standing
281 in individuals with knee OA. Both the knee OA and control groups utilized the ankle joint to
282 control the AP COM position. For the control of ML COM position, the knee OA group used
283 the hip joint, whereas the control group used the ankle joint. The knee OA group successfully
284 controlled the AP and ML COM positions because there was no significant group difference
285 in the amplitude of COM position. To control the AP COM velocity, the knee OA group
286 relied on the contribution of hip joint solely, whereas the control group relied on the
287 contribution of hip and knee joints. Both the knee OA and control groups used the hip joint to
288 control the ML COM velocity. The knee OA group exhibited postural control impairment in
289 the amplitude of COM velocity in the AP plane, and not in the ML plane though. Our findings
290 suggested that the knee OA group could not successfully control the AP COM velocity using
291 the knee joint.

292

293 **Acknowledgements**

294 The authors did not receive any grants for this study.

295

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401 **Tables**

402 **Table 1**

403 Demographic data of the knee OA and control groups

	Knee OA	Control	<i>P</i>
Age (years)	67.8 (8.9)	63.5 (8.6)	0.258
Height (cm)	153.8 (7.5)	156.1 (8.2)	0.488
Weight (kg)	56.8 (15.2)	57.7 (10.3)	0.866
BMI (kg/m ²)	23.7 (4.1)	23.6 (3.1)	0.924
Kellgren–Lawrence grade (n)			
Grade 2	4		
Grade 3	6		
VAS score for knee pain (mm) ^a	23.8 (17.8)		

404 Data are reported as mean values (standard deviation).

405 OA: osteoarthritis, BMI: body mass index, VAS: visual analogue scale.

406 ^a VAS score for knee pain ranges from 0 (no pain) to 100 mm (severe pain).

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417 **Table 2**

418 Pearson's correlation coefficients between each lower limb joint angle and COM

419 position

	Knee OA		Control	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
SD of AP COM position				
SD of AP hip angle	0.129	0.722	0.207	0.497
SD of AP knee angle	0.311	0.382	0.418	0.155
SD of AP ankle angle	0.662	0.037*	0.777	0.002*
SD of ML COM position				
SD of ML hip angle	0.925	< 0.001*	0.366	0.219
SD of ML ankle angle	0.239	0.507	0.726	0.005*

420 COM: center of mass, OA: osteoarthritis, SD: standard deviation, AP: anterior-

421 posterior, ML: medial-lateral.

422 * $P < 0.05$.

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433 **Table 3**

434 Pearson's correlation coefficients between each lower limb joint angular velocity and
 435 COM velocity

	Knee OA		Control	
	<i>r</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>P</i>
SD of AP COM velocity				
SD of AP hip angular velocity	0.644	0.044*	0.562	0.046*
SD of AP knee angular velocity	0.539	0.108	0.673	0.012*
SD of AP ankle angular velocity	0.424	0.222	0.427	0.146
SD of ML COM velocity				
SD of ML hip angular velocity	0.820	0.004*	0.846	< 0.001*
SD of ML ankle angular velocity	-0.023	0.949	0.212	0.488

436 COM: center of mass, OA: osteoarthritis, SD: standard deviation, AP: anterior-
 437 posterior, ML: medial-lateral.

438 * $P < 0.05$.

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449 **Table 4**

450 Pearson's correlation coefficients between the COM and lower limb joint motions and
 451 knee pain in patients with knee OA

	Knee OA	
	<i>r</i>	<i>P</i>
VAS score for knee pain		
SD of AP COM position	-0.352	0.319
SD of ML COM position	-0.196	0.588
SD of AP COM velocity	-0.182	0.614
SD of ML COM velocity	-0.105	0.772
SD of AP hip angle	0.467	0.173
SD of AP knee angle	0.449	0.193
SD of AP ankle angle	-0.322	0.364
SD of ML hip angle	-0.015	0.966
SD of ML ankle angle	0.561	0.092
SD of AP hip angular velocity	-0.196	0.587
SD of AP knee angular velocity	-0.044	0.904
SD of AP ankle angular velocity	0.145	0.689
SD of ML hip angular velocity	-0.134	0.711
SD of ML ankle angular velocity	0.495	0.146

452 COM: center of mass, OA: osteoarthritis, VAS: visual analogue scale, SD: standard
 453 deviation, AP: anterior-posterior, ML: medial-lateral.

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457 **Figure captions**

458 **Fig. 1.** Group-averaged SD of COM position (a) and velocity (b) in the AP and ML planes.

459 The white bar indicates the knee OA group and the black bar indicates the control group. * P

460 < 0.05 .

461

462 **Fig. 2.** Group-averaged SD of hip, knee, and ankle angles in the AP (a) and ML (b) planes.

463 The White bar indicates the knee OA group and the black bar indicates the control group. * P

464 < 0.05 .

465

466 **Fig. 3.** Group-averaged SD of hip, knee, and ankle angular velocities in the AP (a) and ML

467 (b) planes. The white bar indicates the knee OA group and the black bar indicates the control

468 group. * $P < 0.05$.

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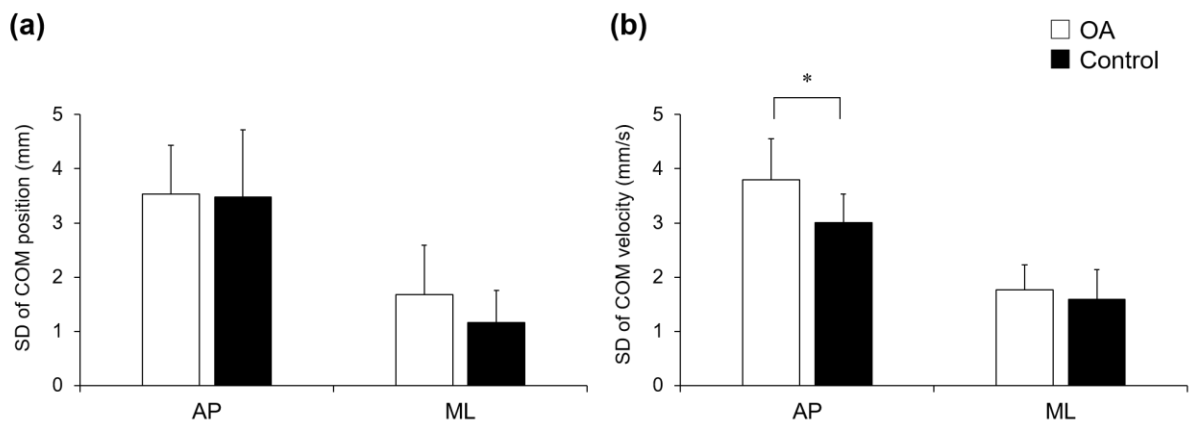
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482 **Figures**

483 **Figure 1**



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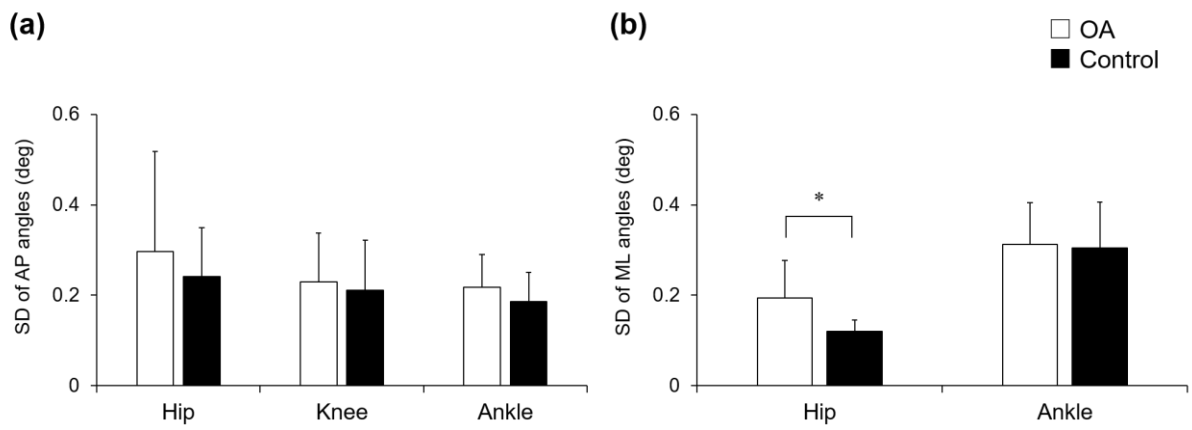
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502 **Figure 2**



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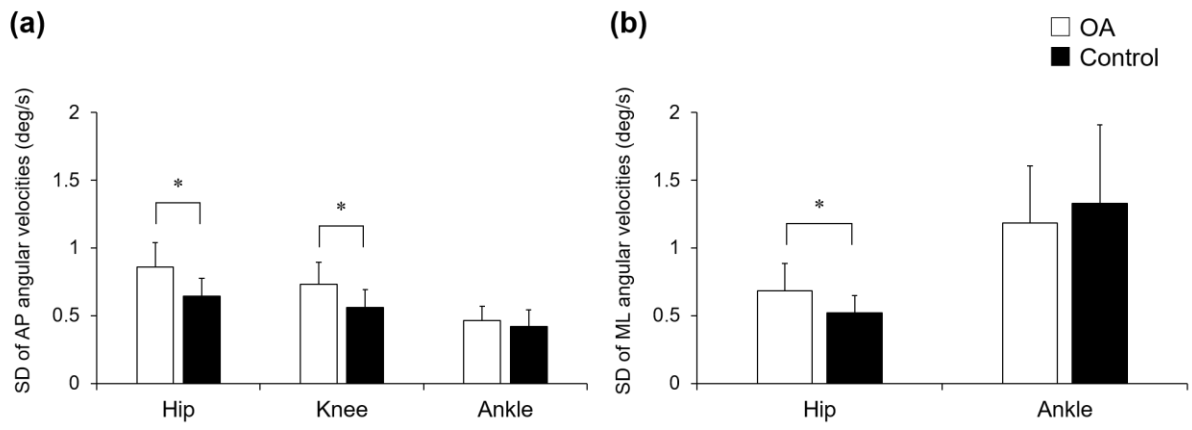
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522 **Figure 3**



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