

Double joints are just one, actually.



GETTY IMAGES

MAA SAYS

“YOU GOT THIS”

Hey alumni, remember how being a medical student is, like, **WHEW**, hard? “Go to your memory banks and think of how just a little bit may have helped you at that time,” says David Metro (MD '94), MAA executive committee board president. “You think of the expenses of school, but think of some of these new expenses students have. They’re doing all these things that we didn’t even think of,” like presenting research at national conferences. And the pandemic has put more pressure on students.

Pitt Med students need your financial support and mentorship. The MAA has been developing digital programs to offer student networking by specialty and help third-year students get in touch with alumni who are now in their residencies. (That way students can get the scoop on programs they might not get to visit.)

So alums, whether you've got a dime or time, drop MAA director Alexandra Rigby a line: amr276@pitt.edu. —*Cara Masset*

FOR REAL! TWEEN SCIENCE



Among his other cool abilities, a DC Comics superhero named Plastic Man can bend floppily in any direction. It’s a (made-up) talent that (real-life) double-jointed people might relate to. They can bend and stretch like they’re made of Silly Putty. They don’t have two joints in one. They’re hypermobile. Lots of kids have hypermobility that they outgrow.

Our joints are where two bones come together. One bone ends in a rounded shape. It fits into the other bone, which ends in a socket, like a ball in a catcher’s glove. If the socket is shallow, your joint could be very loose, giving you a lot of motion. This kind of hypermobility is common in our shoulders and helps baseball and tennis players swing hard and fast.

Ligaments wrap around our joints to hold them together as we move. If these ligaments are extra stretchy, that’s another way joints can be hypermobile. Dancers and gymnasts might have this kind of hypermobility in their hips and knees.

Cool as hypermobility is, we should try not to overstretch, even if it doesn’t hurt. Over time it can lead to painful conditions like your joints slipping out of place . . . which isn’t fun at all. —*Lela Nargi*

Bryson Lesniak, associate professor of orthopaedic surgery at Pitt, helped us bone up on hypermobility.