

EXERCISE

Keep Moving

People with arthritis can exercise!



Even though you have arthritis you can reduce your pain and improve your flexibility with exercise.

Exercise helps improve your ability to do daily activities.

Exercise:

- Keeps your joints moving
- Keeps the muscles around your joints strong
- Keeps bone and cartilage tissue strong and healthy

How does exercise help my arthritis?

- Gives you more energy
- Helps you sleep better
- Controls your weight
- Makes your heart stronger
- Decreases depression
- Helps you feel better about yourself

What happens if I do not exercise?

If you do not exercise, your joints can become more stiff and painful.

Because you have arthritis, it is important to keep your muscles as strong as possible. The stronger the muscles around your joints, the better they will be able to protect and support your joints.

REMEMBER...

the two-hour pain rule: Exercise might make your muscles sore. But it should relieve your arthritis pain. If the pain is worse two hours after you finish, then you may have exercised too much.

How often should I exercise?

An exercise program can be created for everyone. Your doctor can help you figure out how often you should exercise and what kinds of exercise are best for you based on:

- The type of arthritis you have
- Which joints are affected
- How severe your arthritis is
- Any other health problems you have

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Types of exercise

People with arthritis often feel better when they do three types of exercises:

Range-of-motion exercises

“Range of motion” is the normal amount your joints can be moved in certain directions.

- Reduce stiffness
- Keep your joints flexible

Strengthening exercises

- Keep or increase muscle strength

Endurance exercises

- Make your heart and lungs stronger
- Include walking, biking and swimming

When should I exercise?

Try exercising at different times of the day until you decide what works best for you.

Tips for better exercise

BEFORE EXERCISE

- Apply hot or cold treatments to the areas you will be exercising.
- Take five to 15 minutes to warm up.
- Wear comfortable clothes and shoes.

REMEMBER...

- Talk to your doctor about the exercises that are best for you.
- Warm up before you exercise.
- Cool down after you exercise.
- You will get better at doing these exercises the more you do them.
- The more you do them the better you will feel.

DURING EXERCISE

- Exercise at an easy, steady pace.
- Breathe while you exercise.
- Pay attention to your body.
- Don't do too much too fast.

AFTER EXERCISE

- Always cool down to lessen your chances of injury.



The Arthritis Foundation is not responsible for any injury that might happen while doing these exercises.