

EXERCISE

Strengthening Exercises

Exercise can help your arthritis.



Exercise can help people with arthritis.

Starting to exercise can be hard, but in a short time you will feel better. When you feel better you will enjoy exercise and life much more.

Three types of exercises that should be in your exercise program:

- Range-of-motion exercises
- Strengthening exercises
- Endurance exercises

This guide will help you learn strengthening exercises. These exercises will make you stronger. And being stronger can help your arthritis pain.

Two common types of exercises that will make you stronger are:

- **Isometric** (eye-so-MET-ric) exercise is when you tighten your muscles but do not move your joints. These exercises help you build muscle without having to move painful joints.
- **Isotonic** (eye-so-TON-ic) exercise is when you move your joints to make your muscles stronger.

All of these exercises are special types for people with arthritis.

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.

Talk to your doctor before you start any type of exercise program.

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Exercises that make you stronger

Do these exercises every day.



Examples of isometric exercises

Leg sets - tighten the large muscle at the front of your thigh

Rear end sets - tighten the muscles in your buttocks

This exercise makes the muscles that bend and straighten your knee stronger.

1. Sit in a straight-backed chair and cross your ankles.
2. Your legs can be straight, or you can bend your knees.
3. Push forward with your bottom leg and press backward with your top leg.
4. Push the same with both legs. Your legs should not move.
5. Hold your legs like this until you count for six to 10 seconds.
6. Relax.
7. Then change leg positions and repeat the exercise.



Example of isotonic exercise

This exercise makes your thigh muscle stronger.

1. Sit in a chair with both feet on the floor. Hold your feet slightly apart.
2. Raise one foot until your leg is straight.
3. Hold the leg up and count out loud for six to 10 seconds.
4. Gently lower your foot to the floor.
5. Relax.
6. Then do the exercise with your other leg.

Water exercise can help strengthen muscles. By doing exercises in water you get a harder workout. It is also easier on your joints.

REMEMBER...

- Talk to your doctor about the exercises that are best for you.
- Always cool down after exercising.
- Keep a positive attitude about yourself and your exercise program.
- You will get better at doing these exercises the more you do them.
- The more you do them the better you will feel.

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



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For more information about exercises for your arthritis contact:
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