

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND ARTHRITIS: YOU CAN DO IT!

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the difference between exercise and physical activity?

Physical Activity - any body movement beyond sitting or sleeping

Exercise – usually planned, structured time spent doing something for a specific purpose such as health benefits.

2. How do I know if I am overweight?

Health professionals use Body Mass Index to determine if you are a health weight, overweight, or obese. Body mass index or BMI is a measure of body weight relative to height.

3. How do I determine my own BMI?

You can determine your BMI by using the BMI chart. (*You can find a copy for reproduction of the BMI chart in the appendix folder*) or at http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/bmi_tbl.pdf

For example: Let's say you are 5 feet 6 inches or 66 inches and weigh 155 pounds. Then you look on the chart for 66 inches and find 155 on the chart. You follow the line directly up to find your BMI number. Using this chart, you can see that your BMI is 25.

Or you can use this mathematical formula to figure out BMI.

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{Weight in pounds} \times 703}{\text{Height in inches} \times \text{Height in inches}}$$

For example: You are 5 feet 6 inches and weigh 155 pounds.

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{155 \text{ pounds} \times 703}{66 \text{ inches} \times 66 \text{ inches}}$$

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{108965}{4356}$$

BMI= 25

4. Once I know my BMI number, what does this mean to me?

A body mass index (BMI) of 18.5 up to 25 refers to a healthy weight, a BMI of 25 up to 30 refers to overweight and a BMI of 30 or higher refers to obese.

5. What does scientifically tested mean?

Scientifically tested means a product or program has been evaluated and the results show that the product or program is safe and effective.

6. What does risk factor mean?

A risk factor is a characteristic or behavior that makes you more likely to get a disease.

7. What is the difference in recommendations of physical activity for people with arthritis and people without arthritis?

Recommendations for people with arthritis: 30 minutes at least 3 or more days per week (beyond routine activity). The 30 minutes sessions can be done in 10 minutes bouts.

Recommendations for people without arthritis: 30 minutes for most days of the week. 60 minutes a day to prevent weight gain. 60-90 minutes a day to sustain weight loss.

8. Can you tell me more about the Arthritis Foundation resources?

BOOKS

Change Your Life! Simple Strategies To Lose Weight, Get Fit and Improve Your Outlook

Designed to help people with arthritis set lifestyle goals, lower weight, improve fitness and control stress. Useful as prevention tool, or for the person with arthritis who needs to lose weight or improve fitness.

Walk With Ease: Your Guide to Walking for Better Health, Improved Fitness and Less Pain (2nd Edition)

Newer updated edition of the popular walking guidebook. Includes customized walk-for-fitness routine, stretching exercises and heart-rate monitoring techniques. Based on former Arthritis Foundation program. Useful for anyone with arthritis who seeks to improve general fitness.

The Arthritis Foundation's Guide to Managing Your Arthritis

Basic, all-purpose "patient primer" on arthritis and related diseases, including types of arthritis, diagnosis, common drugs, surgery, alternatives and lifestyle

management. Useful as a basic guide for anyone seeking broad arthritis information.

The Arthritis Foundation's Guide to Good Living With Osteoarthritis

All-purpose guide to osteoarthritis, including basic explanation of disease, diagnosis, drugs, surgery, alternative therapies and coping strategies. Includes exercise illustrations, drug listings, worksheets and interactive elements. Useful for the person just diagnosed with OA, or anyone with OA who seeks broad information and guidelines for daily living.

The Arthritis Foundation's Guide to Good Living With Rheumatoid Arthritis

All-purpose guide to rheumatoid arthritis, including basic explanation of disease, diagnosis, drugs, surgery, alternative therapies and coping strategies. Includes exercise illustrations, drug listings, worksheets and interactive elements. 2nd Edition published in October 2004. Useful for the person just diagnosed with RA, or anyone with RA who seeks basic information and guidelines for daily living.

The Arthritis Foundation's Guide to Good Living With Fibromyalgia

All-purpose guide to fibromyalgia, including possible causes, diagnosis, drugs, surgical techniques, self-management strategies and alternative therapies. Includes exercise illustrations, drug listings, worksheets and interactive elements. Useful for the person just diagnosed with fibromyalgia, or anyone with fibromyalgia who seeks basic information and guidelines for daily living.

The Good Living With Fibromyalgia Workbook. Interactive workbook companion to *Guide to Good Living With Fibromyalgia*. Activities to help people with fibromyalgia cope with sleep problems, pain, fatigue and other challenges. Useful for the person with fibromyalgia who is interested in self-improvement strategies.

The Arthritis Foundation's Guide to Pain Management

All-purpose guide to the causes and treatments for chronic pain, including arthritis, fibromyalgia, back pain, nerve pain and more. Useful for the person who may not have a diagnosis yet, or the person seeking new strategies for pain management. Includes drugs, surgery, implants, neurostimulation devices, alternative therapies and more.

VIDEO/AUDIO

People with Arthritis Can Exercise (PACE), Level I (VHS)

Based on Arthritis Foundation exercise program. Exercises to help build flexibility, strength and overall health. Useful for anyone with arthritis or a related disease, even those with very limited mobility.

People with Arthritis Can Exercise (PACE), Level II (VHS)

Based on Arthritis Foundation exercise program. Exercises to help build flexibility, strength and overall health. More challenging than PACE I. Useful for anyone with arthritis or a related disease, particularly those with more physical mobility.

Walk With Ease: Your Step-by-Step Audio Guide to Better Health, Improved Fitness and Less Pain (Audiobook)

Audiobook companion to the popular walking guidebook. Includes planning and preparation for your walking program, plus a full walking routine set to original music, with stretches and heart-rate checks. Useful for anyone with arthritis seeking to improve general fitness.

BROCHURES

Exercise & Your Arthritis

Walking & Arthritis

Managing Your Pain

Water Exercise

Arthritis Today's Walking Guide

Make Waves: A Warm Water Exercise Card

MAGAZINE

Arthritis Today is the award-winning bimonthly magazine of the Arthritis Foundation that provides the latest information on research, treatments and trends and tips from experts about self-management.

9. What should I do if I can't get to the doctor right away and I have swelling?

While waiting to visit your doctor, you can follow these five simple actions to help with swelling. (P.R.I.C.E.)

- **P.** is to **Protect**. Immobilize the area to protect it from further injury. Use an elastic wrap, splint, sling or air cast to immobilize the area, and use a cane or crutches to help you get around.
- **R.** is for **Rest**. Avoid activities that cause pain, swelling or discomfort. But don't avoid all physical activity. Instead, give yourself relative rest. If you experience swelling that is out of ordinary for you, then rest the joint for 24-48 hours.
- **I** is for **Ice**. Even if you're seeking medical help, ice the area immediately. Place a towel between the ice-pack and your skin. Use an ice pack or slush bath for 15 to 20 minutes each time and repeat every two to three hours while you're awake for the first 48 to 72 hours. Cold reduces pain, swelling and inflammation in injured muscles, joints and connective tissues. It also may slow bleeding if a tear has occurred. If the area turns white, stop treatment immediately. This could indicate frostbite. If you have vascular disease, diabetes or decreased sensation, talk with your doctor before applying Ice.

- **C.** is for compression. To help stop swelling, compress the area with an elastic bandage until the swelling stops. Don't wrap it too tightly or you may hinder circulation. Begin wrapping at the end farthest from your heart. Loosen the wrap if the pain increases, the area becomes numb or swelling is occurring below the wrapped area.
- **E.** is for Elevation. Elevate the swollen joints at night by putting pillow underneath the injured area. Gravity helps reduce swelling by draining excess fluid. You want to elevate the joint above the level of your heart to achieve the best reduction in swelling.¹

Demonstration: The presenter may want to demonstrate compression by wrapping your knee with a bandage and demonstrate elevation by sitting on a chair and placing your leg on another chair in front of you with a pillow underneath your knee.