



State of Wisconsin

Department of Health and Family Services

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Staying Active Best Way to Control Arthritis Pain

Arthritis affects one in every four adults in Wisconsin, and nationally it is the most common cause of disability. Yet state health officials report that if arthritis sufferers exercise for short period of time, despite their discomfort, they can come one step closer to relieving some of their aches and pains.

“Arthritis really hurts, and it’s very difficult for people to endure chronic pain and stiffness on a daily basis,” said Dr. Sheri Johnson, State Health Officer. “But only 30 minutes of moderate physical activity three or more days a week can help relieve joint pain and improve function.”

Arthritis symptoms can be particularly frustrating when they hinder tasks like carrying groceries or getting in or out of a car. Nevertheless, all arthritis sufferers are encouraged to consider the following steps for finding success in managing their condition:

- **Watch Your Weight.** If you maintain a healthy weight you could reduce the risk of developing arthritis and may decrease disease progression.
- **Be Active and Keep it Up.** Start slowly. Try 10 or 15 minutes at a time. Take a 15-minute walk. Later, go for a 15-minute bike or swim. You can also vary your activities. Everything from dancing to gardening to washing the car can help improve your condition. Make activities more fun by asking friends or family members to join you.
- **Develop Your Skills.** There are group exercise classes specifically for people with arthritis. The Arthritis Foundation Exercise and Aquatics Programs have been proven to reduce pain, stiffness and even visits to the doctor. You can find out more information about local course offerings at www.arthritis.org. You can also learn other techniques for developing the skills and confidence to manage your arthritis on a day-to-day basis by taking a Living Well with Chronic Conditions workshop. Find more information about local course offerings at http://discover-net.net/~ageadvan/Living_Well.htm.
- **Consult Your Healthcare Provider** for early diagnosis and management. The earlier you begin controlling your arthritis, the better your chances are it won't slow you down later in life.
- **Protect Your Joints** from sport and occupational injury. Be realistic about activities you can do safely, and know your limits.

Learn more by visiting: <http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/health/arthritis/>

For more statistical information visit the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System website at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/stats/BRFS.htm>

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