



**www.arthritis.org**  
**800-283-7800**

# Managing Your Pain

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## UNDERSTANDING YOUR PAIN

Dealing with pain can be the hardest part of having arthritis or a related condition, but you can learn to manage it and limit its impact on your life. The first step is knowing which type of arthritis or condition you have, because that will help determine your treatment. Before learning different management techniques, however, it's important to understand some important concepts about pain.

### Not All Pain Is Alike

Just as there are different types of arthritis, there also are different types of pain. Even your own pain may vary from day to day.

Each person needs a pain management plan. What works for one person may not work for someone else. You may need to try several different treatments before you find the one that works for you.

### The Purpose of Pain

Pain is your body's alarm system that tells you something is wrong. When your body is

injured or battling diseases like arthritis, nerves in the affected area release chemical signals. Other nerves send these signals to your brain, where they are recognized as pain.

Pain often tells you that you need to act. For example, if you touch a hot stove, pain signals from your brain make you pull your hand away. This type of pain helps protect you.

Long-lasting, chronic pain, like the kind that accompanies arthritis or a related disease like fibromyalgia, is different. While it tells you that something is wrong, it often isn't as easy to relieve. Managing this type of pain is essential to improve your quality of life.

### Causes of Pain

Pain from arthritis and related diseases is caused by several factors, including:

- Inflammation that contributes to the redness and swelling in your joints, and
- Damage to joint tissues from the disease or from stress, injury or pressure on the joints.

Along with physical changes, such as difficulty moving around, the emotional ups and downs, and fatigue often associated with arthritis also can add to your pain. If you feel depressed or stressed because your movement is limited or you can no longer do some activities you enjoy, your pain may seem worse. You can get caught in a cycle of pain, limited/lost abilities, stress and depression that makes managing pain and arthritis much more difficult.

### Different Reactions to Pain

People react differently to pain for several reasons. Physical factors such as the sensitivity of your own nervous system and the severity of your arthritis determine how your body reacts to pain. These factors influence whether your nerves will send or block pain signals.

Emotional and social factors also affect your reaction to pain and how much pain you feel. These include your fears and anxieties about pain, previous experiences with pain, energy level and attitude about your condition. The way people around you react to pain also may affect your own reaction to it.

Many people with arthritis have found that by learning and practicing pain management skills, they can reduce their pain.

### *Pain Factors*

What can make your pain feel worse?

- Increased disease activity
- Emotional and/or physical stress
- Focusing on pain
- Fatigue
- Anxiety
- Depression

What can block pain signals?

- Positive attitude and pleasant thoughts
- Appropriate exercise
- Relaxation
- Medications
- Massage
- Distraction
- Topical pain relievers
- Humor
- Heat and cold treatments

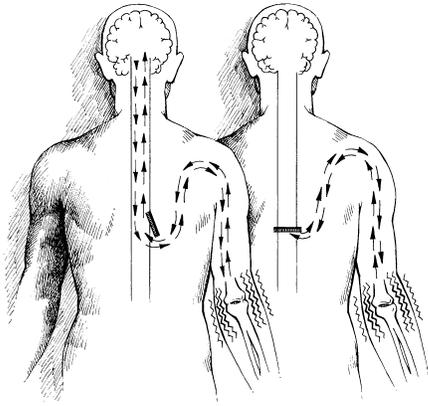
### How the Body Controls Pain

Pain signals travel through a system of nerves located in your extremities, spinal cord and brain. When you experience pain, your body tries to stop or limit pain by creating chemicals that help block pain signals traveling through the nerves. One example of these chemicals, called endorphins, are morphine-like painkilling substances that decrease the pain sensation.

Different factors cause the body to produce endorphins such as your own thoughts and emotions. For example, a father who is driving with his children is hurt in a car accident. He is so worried about his children that he doesn't feel the pain of his own broken arm. The concern for his children has caused the natural release of endorphins, which block the pain signal and prevent him from noticing his own pain.

### MANAGING YOUR PAIN

You can learn to manage your pain by thinking of pain as a signal that may be modified by taking positive actions. You may want to consider taking some positive actions, such as the ones described on the following pages, to counter pain.



Pain can be controlled by blocking pain signals.

### Take Control

Your mind plays an important role in how you feel about pain and how you respond to illness. Some people with arthritis may feel helpless and depressed. With these feelings come decreased activity, low self-esteem and increased pain. Use the tips below to build a sense of personal control by adjusting your thoughts and actions.

**Keep a positive attitude.** Arthritis may limit some of the things you can do, but it doesn't have to control your life. One way to reduce your pain is to build your life around wellness, not pain or sickness. This means thinking positive thoughts, having a sense of humor, eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly, surrounding yourself with positive people and enjoying activities with friends and family. It also means following your treatment plan, taking your medication properly and practicing relaxation.

**Don't focus on pain.** How often do you think about your pain? The amount of time you spend thinking about pain has a lot to do with how much discomfort you feel. People who dwell on their pain usually say their pain is worse than those who don't dwell on it. One way to take your mind off pain is to focus on something else.

Everyone has the ability to distract themselves from pain. The more you focus on something outside of your body, such as a hobby or other activity, the less you will be aware of physical discomfort. If you can't avoid thinking about the pain, try to think about it differently. Think of the pain as your body's message to do something different. For example, if your pain is worse after sitting for a period of time, your body may be telling you to get up and move around.

**Practice positive self-talk.** What we say to ourselves often determines what we do and how we look at life. For example, you may come home from work and think, "I don't want to exercise today. It's cloudy outside, there's no one to walk with, and besides, I've already exercised twice this week." Or perhaps you approach the situation from a different perspective and think, "I don't feel like exercising today, but I know I'll feel better afterward and have an easier time falling asleep."

Both of these are examples that illustrate the self-talk approach, and each can affect the way you feel pain. Negative messages can lead to increased pain, while positive messages can help distract and lessen your pain.

Changing negative self-talk to positive self-talk can be a challenge. To make the change, follow these three steps:

1. Make a list of your negative self-talk statements.
2. Change each negative statement to a positive one. For example, "I'm tired and don't feel like attending my support group tonight, but if I don't go I might miss out on some good tips like the ones I learned last month. I can always leave the meeting a little early."
3. Practice positive self-talk. At first it may seem awkward, but you'll soon discover what a difference it can make.

**Change your pain habits.** It's easy to slip into the habit of taking more medicine or relying on unhealthy practices, such as drinking alcohol, to escape your pain. If you answer "yes" to any of the questions below, you should consider some new ways to handle your pain.

- Do you finish a bottle of pain medicine faster than you used to?
- Do you spend a lot of time in bed, aside from your regular sleep time?
- Do you cancel planned activities at the last moment because of pain?
- Do you drink alcohol to ease your pain?
- Do you talk about pain or arthritis much of the time?

Changing your habits for dealing with pain will help you feel better. One way to make a change is to do something positive in place of the old habit. Reinforce your behavior change by rewarding yourself each time you do something positive – perhaps by spending some extra time in a soothing whirlpool or taking an additional 10 minutes to read the morning newspaper. Discuss these habits with your doctor, nurse or other health professional that specializes in pain management. Ask about additional ways to manage pain.

Create a pain management plan. Make a chart of your own pain control methods to help keep track of methods you have used and the ones that work best for you. Use the worksheet on the opposite page as a guide. Post it on your refrigerator so you can refer to it often.

Work with your health-care team to create your own pain management plan based on the model provided below. Include plenty of space for your written responses. Post your plan where you will see it and be reminded to use it often.

#### Information For Pain Management Plan:

- Medications: Types of medications I take, when I take them, how much I take
- Exercise: Type of exercise I will do, when I will do it, how long I will do it
- Rest: When I will completely rest, when I will rest specific joints, when I will wear my splint
- Heat, cold and/or massage treatment: What I will do, when I will do it
- Relaxation: Forms of relaxation I will practice, how often I will practice
- Other healthy habits: Some healthy habits I will practice
- Questions for my health-care team
- Resources and services I can rely on for assistance
- Local Arthritis Foundation address and phone
- Doctor's name, address and phone
- Physical and/or occupational therapist's name, address and phone
- Pharmacist's name, address and phone
- Other members of my health-care team
- Other resources that can help me

#### Take Medicines Wisely

Many different types of medicines can help control the pain of arthritis. Your doctor may recommend some of these depending on your type of arthritis, how much pain you have and other factors. For more detailed information on specific medications, request a free copy of Arthritis Today's Drug Guide. For the office near you, call (800) 283-7800 or log on to [www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org).

**Analgesics** are drugs that help relieve pain. Some of them also help to decrease inflammation. Acetaminophen is one example of an analgesic that gives temporary relief of com-

mon arthritis pain but does not reduce swelling and inflammation. It is available without a prescription. Many doctors consider acetaminophen the preferred initial treatment for the pain of mild to moderate osteoarthritis, the most common type of arthritis.

### *Pain Management Plan*

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**Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs** (NSAIDs) help reduce stiffness and swelling. They are also analgesics and may reduce joint pain. NSAIDs cut down on the production of prostaglandins, which are chemicals in the body that promote inflammation and lead to the production of pain signals. Examples of NSAIDs include aspirin, ibuprofen and naproxen sodium. Other NSAIDs are available by prescription only. NSAIDs can cause side effects such as stomach upset or ulcers.

Selective COX-2 inhibitors (cyclooxygenase-2), such as celecoxib (*Celebrex*), rofecoxib (*Vioxx*) and valdecoxib (*Bextra*), are a subcategory of NSAIDs that may cause fewer stomach problems. All NSAIDs work by blocking the production of prostaglandins. Traditional NSAIDs, however, not only block prostaglandins at the site of inflammation, but also block prostaglandins that provide protection to the stomach. Many doctors consider COX-2 inhibitors the preferred treatment for the pain of moderate to severe osteoarthritis.

The selective COX-2 inhibitors block production of prostaglandins at the inflammation site, but do not affect prostaglandins in the stomach. As a result, there is a reduced risk of stomach problems such as pain, ulcers or bleeding with the COX-2 inhibitors. COX-2 inhibitors don't affect platelets and clotting and therefore do not provide protection against strokes or heart attacks. i Low-dose aspirin therapy may need to be added for patients at risk for heart attacks or strokes.

All NSAIDs, including COX-2 inhibitors, occasionally can cause a decline in kidney function. They may also elevate blood pressure or cause fluid retention in some people.

**Corticosteroids** are drugs related to the natural hormone in your body called cortisol.

Scientists have developed synthetic forms of cortisol that can be taken in pill form or injected directly into joints or other tissues. These drugs help relieve pain by reducing swelling and inflammation in the area. Corticosteroid injections must be monitored carefully; side effects can occur if you receive injections too frequently.

### *Tips for Using Medicine Safely*

- Take your medicines exactly as your doctor instructs.
- Don't stop taking a medicine unless your doctor recommends it. You may need a dose change, another medication or a combination of medications.
- Keep in mind that some medicines may take a while to begin working.

**Disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs** (DMARDs) often are used to control inflammatory conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis and related diseases. While their main functions are to reduce inflammation, slow down the process of the underlying disease and prevent joint damage, these drugs help relieve pain by controlling inflammation and limiting joint damage. The drugs may take several weeks or months to begin working. Examples of DMARDs include methotrexate, hydroxychloroquine, azulfidine and leflunomide.

**Biologic response modifiers** (BRMs), also called biologic agents, are used to suppress arthritis inflammation. Four BRMs have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration to treat rheumatoid arthritis: adalimumab (*Humira*), anakinra (*Kineret*), etanercept (*Enbrel*) and infliximab (*Remicade*). Etanercept

has been approved for patients with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis (JRA). These drugs help improve pain by reducing inflammation and limiting joint damage, similar to DMARDs.

**Antidepressants**, in addition to relieving depression, also can help relieve chronic pain. One class of antidepressants, the tricyclic antidepressants, such as amitriptyline and nortriptyline, are typically prescribed for the chronic pain of fibromyalgia. These drugs work through their effects upon pain messengers in the brain. These drugs also can help improve the quality of sleep, which in turn may help reduce pain. The doses used to treat pain and sleep problems are usually lower than those used for depression. Other types of antidepressants, such as the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI), are sometimes used to help people with arthritis break out of the pain and depression cycle described.

**Topical pain relievers** can temporarily relieve the pain of arthritis. They include creams, rubs and sprays that are applied to the skin over a painful muscle or joint. Some topical pain relievers may contain combinations of salicylates (sa-LIS-ill-ates), skin irritants and local anesthetics that relieve pain in one area.

Salicylates decrease the ability of the nerve endings in the skin to sense pain. Irritants stimulate nerve endings in the skin to cause feelings of cold, warmth or itching, which distract attention from the actual pain.

Other over-the-counter topical creams containing capsaicin (the chemical that makes chili peppers taste "hot") may be used alone or with other medications to temporarily relieve pain. When applied as directed to joints affected by arthritis, the medication usually begins to work within one to two weeks. It works by decreas-

ing a chemical in the nerves called substance P, which sends pain signals to the brain. Some people may at first feel a burning or stinging sensation where capsaicin is applied, but this usually goes away with repeated applications.

**Opioids and other strong painkillers** traditionally have been prescribed mainly for short-term and intense pain. Some physicians believe that with careful monitoring these types of drugs can be effective long-term in treating chronic pain. Opioids, such as morphine and codeine, reduce pain by blocking pain signals that are traveling to the brain.

**Muscle relaxants**, such as cyclobenzaprine or carisoprodol, may relieve pain by decreasing muscle spasms that often trigger pain signals. However, they often are used only for brief periods of time.

**Anticonvulsants**, such as gabapentin, are medicines that have been used to treat seizures, but have been found to be beneficial in certain types of pain, especially those caused by damage to the nerves. Other examples of such medicines include carbamazepine, phenytoin, valproate and clonazepam.

**Nerve blocks** are injections of anesthetic drugs (similar to what a dentist uses) directly into the nerves of the painful area. Nerve blocks can help relieve nerve, tendon, ligament and muscle pain. Often nerve blocks are not as effective for long-lasting pain. They also can cause temporary muscle weakness.

### Exercise Regularly

Through exercise, you can improve your overall health and fitness, as well as your arthritis symptoms. Exercise can:

- keep joints moving;
- keep the muscles around joints strong;

- keep bones strong and healthy;
- help you to do daily activities more easily; and
- improve your overall health and fitness, including increasing your energy, improving your sleep, controlling your weight, strengthening your heart, and improving your self-esteem and sense of well-being.

Regular exercise also can help you effectively manage pain. A physical therapist, occupational therapist or doctor can recommend an exercise program for you.

Your program should include exercises to keep your joints flexible and moving in their range-of-motion. It also may include endurance exercise such as water exercise, walking or riding a stationary bicycle. Endurance exercises are beneficial because they strengthen your heart. They make your lungs work more efficiently and give you more stamina so that you can work longer without tiring as quickly. Endurance exercises also help you sleep better, control your weight and improve your overall sense of well-being.

Some experts think alternative exercise, such as yoga and tai chi, can be beneficial for people with arthritis. These forms of exercise can improve flexibility, increase muscle strength and help you relax.

### Exercise Tips

- Start with just a few exercises, then slowly add more.
- “Listen” to your body. If your exercise hurts too much, stop. Ask your doctor to help you tell the difference between normal exercise discomfort and the pain related to too much exercise.
- If you have a flare (when disease symptoms return or become worse), do only gentle range-of-motion exercises.

- Ask your local Arthritis Foundation about supervised warm-water or land exercise programs. Many people find that exercising with a group is more fun than working out alone.

### Protect Your Body

Using your joints wisely means doing everyday tasks in ways that reduce the stress on painful joints. Saving your energy means “listening” to your body for signals that it needs to rest. It also means learning to pace yourself. The following guidelines will help you learn to use your joints wisely and save your energy.

- Use proper methods for bending, lifting, reaching, sitting and standing.
- Avoid activities that hurt an affected joint. Use self-help (assistive) devices, such as jar openers, reach extenders, zipper pulls and buttoning aids that put less stress on your affected joints. To improve function, lessen pain, and provide comfort, your physician and rehabilitation therapists may recommend that you use devices, such as canes, or immobilization of joints by splinting or bracing.
- Use your largest and strongest joints and muscles. When you lift or carry objects, use both arms to avoid placing too much stress on one joint or one area of your body.
- Avoid staying in one position for a long time. Move or change positions often. Keeping joints in the same position may cause stiffness and pain.
- Balance activity with rest. Learn to understand your body’s signals that indicate you are getting tired. Take breaks when you need them. Plan your schedule to alternate activity with rest – even when you are feeling well.
- Respect pain. If you have pain that lasts for two hours or more after an activity or exercise, then you’ve done too much. Next time do a little less or use less effort. The Two-Hour Pain Rule says: If you have more arthritis pain (as opposed to sore muscles from exercise) two hours after you exercise than you did before, you’ve probably done too much and should cut back a little. Don’t stop exercising, though. Not exercising can make your arthritis worse.
- Simplify your work. Plan ahead, get organized and use shortcuts. Use labor-saving devices that require less of your energy and place less stress on your joints.
- Ask for help when you need it. Family and friends would rather help you than have you become tired or ill from doing too much.

### Use Heat and Cold

Using heat and cold treatments can reduce the pain and stiffness of arthritis. Cold packs numb the sore area and reduce inflammation and swelling. They are especially good for joint pain caused by a flare. Heat relaxes your muscles and stimulates blood circulation. You can use dry heat, such as heating pads or heat lamps, or moist heat, such as warm baths or heated washcloths.

Before using either treatment, be sure your skin is dry and free from cuts and sores. If you have visible skin damage, don’t use cold or heat, especially a paraffin wax bath. Use a towel to protect your skin from injury when you are treating an area where the bone is close to the skin’s surface.

### How to Use Heat and Cold

- Use either heat or cold for only 15 to 20 minutes at a time. Avoid using treatments that are extremely hot or cold.

- Place a hot pack, heating pad, cold pack or ice bag on the painful area. Use milder temperatures for a child's skin, which is more sensitive than an adult's.
- Always put a towel between your skin and the hot or cold pack.
- Don't use creams, rubs or lotions on your skin with a cold or hot treatment.
- Turn your heating pad off before going to sleep to prevent burns.
- Use an electric blanket or mattress pad. Turn it up before you get out of bed to help ease morning stiffness.
- Use a hot water bottle wrapped in a towel to keep your feet, back or hands warm.
- Consult your doctor or physical therapist before using cold packs if you have poor circulation, vasculitis or Raynaud's phenomenon.
- Follow the advice of your health-care team when using these methods.

After using heat or cold, carefully dry the area and check for purplish-red skin or hives, which may indicate the treatment was too strong. Also check the area for any swelling or discoloration. Gently move your joint to reduce stiffness. Allow your skin to return to normal temperature and color before using heat or cold again.

### Get Enough Sleep

Sleep restores your energy so that you can better manage pain. It also rests your joints to reduce pain and swelling. Only you know how much sleep your body needs, so get into the habit of listening to your body. Most people need approximately seven to nine hours of sleep per night. If you feel tired and achy after lunch every day, if feasible, take a brief nap

(15 to 20 minutes). This can help restore your energy and spirits. If you have trouble sleeping at night, try relaxing quietly in the afternoon rather than taking a nap.

### How to Sleep Better

- Do moderate exercise on a regular basis. Avoid exercise right before bedtime.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine, especially late in the day.
- Establish a regular sleep schedule. It's especially important to get up at the same time every day, even on weekends.
- Take a warm bath before going to bed.
- Listen to soothing music.
- Spend some quiet time by yourself before you go to bed.
- Read for pleasure. Avoid technical information, work-related material, scary novels or other materials that can keep your mind from relaxing.
- Avoid taking sleeping pills unless your doctor recommends them.
- If you are sleeping poorly, be sure to speak with your doctor.

### Consider Massage

Massage brings warmth and relaxation to the painful area. You can massage your own muscles or you can ask your doctor to recommend a professional who is trained to give massages.

Keep these tips in mind when considering massage:

- When doing self-massage, stop if you feel any pain.
- Don't massage a joint that is very swollen or painful.

- When giving yourself a massage, use lotion or oil to help your hands glide over your skin.
- If you use a menthol gel for massage, always remove it to prevent burns before using a heat treatment.
- If you have a professional massage, make sure the massage therapist has experience working with people who have arthritis.

### Practice Relaxation

People who are in pain experience both physical and emotional stress. Pain and stress have similar effects on the body: muscles tighten, breathing becomes fast and shallow, and heart rate and blood pressure go up. Relaxation can help you reverse these effects and give you a sense of control and well being that makes it easier to manage pain. Relaxation is more than just sitting back, reading or watching TV. It involves learning ways to calm and control your body and mind.

There is no best way to learn how to relax, as long as you relax both your body and mind. Try some of the following methods until you find the ones that work for you.

Guided imagery uses your mind to focus on pleasant images. First, begin by breathing slowly and deeply. Think of yourself in a place where you feel comfortable, safe and relaxed. Create all the details – the colors, sounds, smells and feelings. These images take your mind away from pain and focus it on something more pleasant.

Prayer is very relaxing and comforting for some people. You may want to make a tape recording of a soothing inspirational message or practice your own type of personal prayer.

Hypnosis is a form of deep relaxation and guided imagery in which your attention is

focused internally – away from your thoughts and anxieties. People who find hypnosis helpful in relieving pain find that it is both soothing and enjoyable. You'll need to work with a professional psychologist, counselor or social worker that is trained in hypnosis. You also can learn self-hypnosis techniques that you can practice on your own.

Relaxation audiotapes and videotapes can help guide you through the relaxation process. These tapes provide directions for relaxation so you don't have to recall the instructions. You also might want to make your own tape of your favorite relaxation routine.

### Consider Surgery

Most people with arthritis will never need joint surgery. When other treatment methods don't lessen the pain, or when you have major difficulty moving and using your joints, surgery may be necessary. Some types of surgery for arthritis include:

- Arthroscopy, a surgical process that allows the surgeon to view and repair the inside of your joint through an instrument placed in a small opening in the skin;
- Synovectomy, a procedure in which the diseased lining of the joint – the synovium – is removed. It may help relieve pain and swelling; and
- Joint replacement, a procedure in which damaged joints are replaced with artificial joints. It often relieves pain and may restore some joint motion and function.

### Consider Other Treatments

Some of the following techniques are used to treat the chronic muscle pain of fibromyalgia or

chronic nerve and back pain. These treatments are often not necessary for joint inflammation.

**Biofeedback** uses sensitive electrical equipment to help you become more aware of your body's reaction to stress and pain. The equipment monitors your heart rate, blood pressure, skin temperature and muscle tension. A screen or gauge displays the body's signals so you can monitor and adjust your reactions.

**Biofeedback** helps you learn how you feel when your body is tense or relaxed. If you practice relaxation while using biofeedback, you can learn to control some of your body's responses to pain.

**TENS** (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation) treatment involves a small device that directs mild electric pulses to nerves in the painful area. Some types of TENS work on the principle of blocking pain impulses through stimulation of large nerves. Other types of TENS work by causing your body to release endorphins. The amount of pain relief varies widely from person to person.

During TENS treatment, electrodes taped on the skin in painful areas related are connected by wire to a battery-operated stimulator. Stimulation of the nerves by TENS doesn't hurt, but it may cause some tingling. Usually, it feels like a vibrating or tapping sensation. Talk to your doctor or physical therapist about whether TENS might help you.

**Acupuncture** is an ancient Chinese practice of inserting small, thin needles into the skin at specific points on the body. The needles may stimulate nerves to block the pain signal. The procedure is generally safe and has few side effects. Acupuncture may reduce moderate pain for some people. Talk to your doctor about this method of pain relief and how you can find a qualified acupuncture professional.

**Ultrasound** uses high-energy sound waves to bring comfort to painful joints and muscles. A physical or occupational therapist can perform this technique.

## WHO CAN HELP?

### Your Health-Care Team

Talk to your health-care team about ways to manage pain. This group of professionals is coordinated by your doctor and may include a nurse practitioner, an occupational or physical therapist, an exercise physiologist, a social worker, a counselor, a psychologist, a pharmacist, a dietician and other health-care workers.

They are trained to help you learn pain management techniques such as those described in this booklet, and they may be able to recommend helpful services in your area. Don't be afraid to suggest a pain management idea of your own.

### Pain Clinics

Several different health professionals, including physicians, psychologists, physical and occupational therapists, exercise physiologists and nurses, staff these clinics. Pain clinics provide expertise in the evaluation and treatment of pain using many different modalities. They can help to develop a comprehensive plan of management and are particularly helpful for people with chronic or severe pain that has not responded to usual methods of treatment. They may be located in a hospital or may operate independently. Be sure the one you choose specializes in or has experience with your condition.

### Professional Counselors

Any major disturbance in lifestyle – such as illness, chronic pain, family problems or

increased dependence on others – may lead to feelings of anxiety, depression, anger or hopelessness. Many people become depressed when they have severe pain. Some people feel so bad that they cannot sleep or eat. In these cases, therapy, counseling or medication may help.

Some people are afraid to admit that they need help. They believe that other people may think less of them if they talk to a psychiatrist or counselor about their problems. These health professionals are specially trained to work with the emotional side of chronic health problems like arthritis and related conditions. They also can teach you ways to reduce pain by managing stress.

It's smart to get help when you need it. Get help from a health-care professional if you have symptoms of depression such as poor sleep, changes in appetite, crying and sad thoughts.

### Support Groups

Sharing your feelings and experiences with a group can make living easier with the various types of arthritis easier. A support group helps you realize you're not alone and it can give you new ideas for coping with problems. Because you'll be helping others in the group, it also can help you feel good about yourself.

### RESEARCH

Arthritis Foundation-funded research is working to advance research in the area of pain management through a variety of studies. Some studies are focused on increasing understanding of what contributes to pain: neurological factors; the role of stress, depression and family perceptions; and how personality and outlook affect how a person copes with pain. Other researchers are evaluating various types of pain management strategies; such as writing or talking about stress-

ful life experiences; self-management and exercise classes; and how TENS reduces pain, providing a scientific rationale for its use.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact your local Arthritis Foundation for a list of free brochures about different types of arthritis and related conditions, treatment options and self-management techniques. Programs and services such as those listed below may also be helpful as you learn to live better with arthritis.

#### Brochures

Brochures that you may find helpful include:

- **Managing Your Activities** – Suggestions on using your joints wisely during daily activities, plus lists of self-help aids.
- **Managing Your Fatigue** – Information about arthritis-related fatigue and tips on how to manage it.
- **Managing Your Stress** – Tips for reducing the stress associated with arthritis.
- **Surgery & Arthritis: What You Need to Know** – A description of the types of joint surgery, plus questions to ask your doctor prior to surgery and what to expect afterward.

#### Services

- **Arthritis Self-Help Course** – Learn how to take control of your own care in this six-week (15-hour) class for people with arthritis or a related condition.
- **Aquatics Program** – Join in the fun of a six- to 10-week exercise program in a heated pool.
- **People with Arthritis Can Exercise (PACE) Program** – Move easier in several levels of exercise classes, or exercise at home by purchasing an Arthritis Foundation exercise videotape.

## THE ARTHRITIS FOUNDATION

The mission of the Arthritis Foundation is to improve lives through leadership in the prevention, control and cure of arthritis and related diseases.

The Arthritis Foundation supports research with the greatest potential for advances and has invested more than \$320 million in these efforts since its inception in 1948. Additionally, the Arthritis Foundation supports key public policy and advocacy efforts at a local and national level in order to make a difference on behalf of 70 million people living with arthritis.

As your partner in taking greater control of arthritis, the Arthritis Foundation also offers a

large number of programs and services nationwide to make life with arthritis easier and less painful and to help you become an active partner in your own health care.

Contact us at (800) 283-7800 or visit us on the Web at [www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org) to become an Arthritis Advocate or to find out how you can become involved.

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**For more information:** The Arthritis Foundation offers a wide variety of books, brochures and videos about different forms of arthritis, treatment and self-management techniques to help you take control of your arthritis. To order any of these products, become an Arthritis Foundation member or to subscribe to the Arthritis Foundation's award-winning consumer health magazine, *Arthritis Today*, call (800) 283-7800. Call or visit our Web site ([www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org)) to find out how you can take control of your arthritis and start living better today!

### MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Arthritis Foundation is to improve lives through leadership in the prevention, control and cure of arthritis and related diseases.

This brochure has been reviewed by the AMERICAN COLLEGE OF RHEUMATOLOGY.



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