

# ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN



**JULY 2024**

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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC

# 5 TIPS TO MANAGE ARTHRITIS



**M**ore than 20 percent, or 1 in 5, Americans have arthritis. Arthritis is a joint condition that is marked by swelling or tenderness. If you have been diagnosed with arthritis, or experience joint pain, there are some steps you can take to manage your symptoms and feel better.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) Arthritis Management and Wellbeing Program promotes five key messages to help adults affected by arthritis. These messages can help arthritis patients control their condition and their lives.

- 1. See a doctor.** If you have joint pain, seek medical care and a diagnosis. There are many treatment strategies that help you feel better. These include physical therapy, supplements, lifestyle management, and prescription treatment for certain types of inflammatory arthritis.

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# Adults should strive to get at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week. You can break this up into short periods throughout the day and add it up over time.

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**2. Be active.** It can be difficult to want to move your body more when you are in pain. But believe it or not, the right kind of movement is key to reducing pain and improve function, and delay disability related to arthritis. Adults should strive to get at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week. You can break this up into short periods throughout the day and add it up over time. If 150 minutes seems like too much, any physical activity is better than none. So, strive to be as active as you can.

There are evidence-based activity programs specifically for people with arthritis, such as Walk with Ease and Enhance Fitness, among others. These kinds of programs can help you learn how to move more safely and comfortably.

**3. Watch your weight.** Research shows that supporting a healthy weight can reduce limitations from pain, increase mobility, and limit disease progression. For some people that may mean taking steps to lose weight. For adults who are overweight, even a little weight loss can help arthritis-related pain and disability. For every 1 pound lost, there is a 4-pound reduction in the load exerted on the knee, a common joint where people experience arthritis.

**4. Protect your joints.** Be aware of activities that can put your joints at risk for injury, such as repetitive movements at work or with hobbies. Doing the same motion repeatedly can wear out a specific joint. It may be helpful to work with an occupational therapist to see if there are other movements that could save wear on those joints. Certain stretches or exercises can build up strength in surrounding muscles to protect your joints from injury, as well. There are also braces that you can wear to give your joints extra protection or prevent over-extension.

**5. Take an arthritis management class.** Interactive workshops teach self-management skills, are



generally low-cost, and are available across the country. Attending one of these programs can help a person learn ways to manage pain, exercise safely, and gain control of arthritis. Learn more about remote and in-person self-management education workshops at <https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/interventions>.

Having arthritis may be a pain, but it does not have to define who you are or limit what you can do. Learning how to live with arthritis can help you to keep moving and enjoying your favorite activities with less pain.

#### REFERENCE:

<https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/about/key-messages.htm>

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