



Arthritis

[Arthritis Home](#)

5 Ways to Manage Arthritis

There are a lot of things you can do to manage your arthritis. The day-to-day things you choose to do to manage your condition and stay healthy are “self-management” strategies and activities. CDC’s Arthritis Management and Wellbeing Program recognizes five self-management strategies for managing arthritis and its symptoms.

Practice these simple strategies to reduce symptoms and get relief so you can pursue the activities that are important to you. These strategies can even help you manage other chronic conditions you may have, such as diabetes, heart disease, or obesity.

Managing Arthritis: Strive for Five

1. [Learn new self-management skills.](#)
2. [Be active.](#)
3. [Talk to your doctor.](#)
4. [Manage your weight.](#)
5. [Protect your joints.](#)



Use these 5 strategies to manage your arthritis at any age.

1. Learn new self-management skills.

Join a self-management education workshop, which can help you learn the skills to manage your arthritis and make good decisions about your health.

How can a self-management education workshop help me?

Learning strategies to better manage your arthritis can help you:

- Feel more in control of your health.
- Manage pain and other symptoms.
- Plan and carry out valued activities, like working and spending time with loved ones.
- Reduce stress.

- Improve your mood.
- Communicate better with your health care provider(s) about your care.

Learn about CDC-recognized [self-management education programs](#) that improve the quality of life of people with arthritis.

2. Be active.

Physical activity is a simple and effective, drug-free way to relieve arthritis pain. Being physically active can reduce pain, improve function, mood, and quality of life for adults with arthritis. Regular physical activity can contribute to improved sleep and support bone health, brain health, and weight control. Physical activity can also reduce your risk of developing other chronic diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes, and help you manage these conditions if you already have them.

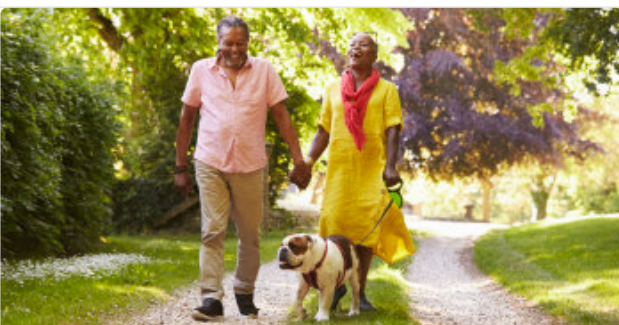
Stay as active as your health allows. Some physical activity is better than none.

The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend that adults be physically active at a moderate intensity for 150 minutes per week. Visit the health.gov website to learn more about the [Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](#) [↗](#).

Unsure about what kind of activity is safe?

Get more information about how to [exercise safely with arthritis](#) or find a community program near you. [Physical activity community programs](#)—like [Enhanced@Fitness](#), [Walk With Ease](#), and others—help adults with arthritis be healthier and reduce arthritis symptoms.

Physical Activity for Arthritis



Learn how you can exercise safely to relieve pain and manage your arthritis.

3. Talk to your doctor.

Talk to your doctor if you have joint pain and other arthritis symptoms. It's important to get an accurate diagnosis as soon as possible so you can start treatment. Early and effective treatment is important to minimize symptoms and prevent the disease from getting worse, especially for certain forms of arthritis, like lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, and gout.

The focus of arthritis treatment is to

- Reduce pain.

- Minimize joint damage.
- Improve or maintain function and quality of life.

You can play an active role in controlling your arthritis by attending regular appointments with your health care provider and following your recommended treatment plan. This is especially important if you also have other chronic conditions, like diabetes or heart disease.

4. Manage your weight.

Losing excess weight and staying at a healthy weight is particularly important for people with arthritis. For people who are overweight or obese, losing weight reduces stress on joints, particularly weight bearing joints like the hips and knees. In fact, losing as little as 10 to 12 pounds can reduce pain and improve physical function for people with arthritis. At any age, low-impact, arthritis-friendly physical activity (for example, walking) combined with healthy dietary changes can help you lose weight.

Learn about managing your weight at CDC's [Healthy Weight website](#).

5. Protect your joints.

Joint injuries can cause or worsen arthritis. Choose activities that are easy on the joints like walking, bicycling, and swimming. These low-impact activities have a low risk of injury and do not twist or put too much stress on the joints. Learn more about how to [exercise safely with arthritis](#).

Injuries to joints from sports, work, or vehicle accidents can increase risk of developing [osteoarthritis](#). Take steps to prevent or minimize joint injuries to reduce the risk of developing or worsening osteoarthritis. Actions include wearing protective equipment, seatbelts, and avoiding repetitive motion joint damage.

Related Pages

- [Arthritis Types](#)
- [Physical Activity for Arthritis](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)
- [Arthritis-Related Statistics](#)

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Source: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion](#), [Division of Population Health](#)