

Transportation, Land Use & Community Design Professionals Make a Difference!

Increasing physical activity among adults with arthritis



Arthritis Matters

Arthritis is the most common cause of disability in the United States, affecting 54 million adults. Arthritis costs our nation \$128 billion each year in medical expenses, lost earnings, and reduced productivity.

Physical activity is highly recommended for adults with arthritis. It can decrease pain, delay the onset of disability, and improve physical functioning, mood, and independence. It also enhances quality of life, aerobic capacity, and muscle strength.

People with arthritis can safely engage in physical activity. A variety of evidence-based physical activity programs have been tested and proven appropriate, safe and effective at relieving symptoms for adults with arthritis (see back page for recommendations).

Unfortunately, far too few adults with arthritis are active enough. Adults with arthritis are less likely to be physically active than those without the disease and this gap widens even further for adults with arthritis who also have diabetes or heart disease, or are obese.

Get Involved

Now...

- Examine planning and zoning efforts, such as complete streets policies, to ensure that adults with arthritis can walk safely to schools, workplaces, shopping areas, places of worship, parks, and other public venues.
- Use walkability checklists to design and maintain safe and accessible community options for physical activity.
- Install, upgrade, and maintain sidewalks and benches in new and existing neighborhoods to create safe functional pathways and resting areas in and around parks, recreation centers, and other public venues.

Over time...

- Encourage state and local planning and transportation boards, authorities, and elected officials to consult with arthritis, aging, and physical activity experts when creating built environments to ensure safety and accessibility for all adults.
- Increase availability and accessibility of appropriate public transportation options for adults with arthritis and physical or mobility limitations or disabilities.
- Utilize planning incentives offered by federal programs to states that incorporate active living principles into planning and zoning standards.

Physical Activity Programs for Adults With Arthritis

The Arthritis Program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends many programs proven to improve the symptoms, function, and quality of life of adults with arthritis.

GROUP EXERCISE PROGRAMS

Active Living Everyday	www.activeliving.info/
Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program	www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/exercise/arthritis-friendly/aquatics.php
Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program	www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/exercise/benefits/osteoarthritis-exercise.php
Arthritis Foundation Walk With Ease Program	www.arthritis.org/walk-with-ease.php
EnhanceFitness	www.projectenhance.org/EnhanceFitness.aspx
Fit and Strong!	www.fitandstrong.org/

HEALTH COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS

Physical Activity: The Arthritis Pain Reliever	www.cdc.gov/arthritis/interventions/physical/overview.htm
Buenos Días, Artritis	www.cdc.gov/arthritis/interventions/campaigns/hispanic/index.htm

SELF-MANAGEMENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Chronic Disease Self-Management Program	www.selfmanagementresource.com/programs/small-group/chronic-disease-self-management/
Tomando Control de su Salud (Spanish Chronic Disease Self-Management Program)	www.selfmanagementresource.com/programs/small-group-spanish/tomando-control-de-su-salud

For more information and resources, visit these helpful web sites:

A National Public Health Agenda for Osteoarthritis	www.cdc.gov/arthritis/docs/OAagenda.pdf
	www.oaaction.unc.edu/policy-solutions/
CDC Intervention Programs	www.cdc.gov/arthritis/interventions.htm
Falls Prevention Programs	www.ncoa.org/healthy-aging/falls-prevention
Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center Walkability Checklist	www.pedbikeinfo.org/cms/downloads/walkability_checklist.pdf
Arthritis Comorbidities	http://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/data_statistics/comorbidities.htm

Note: This information comes from a full report, Environmental and Policy Strategies to Increase Physical Activity Among Adults With Arthritis, that contains additional recommendations for six critical sectors: Community and Public Health; Health Care; Transportation, Land Use, and Community Design; Business and Industry; Park, Recreation, Fitness, and Sport; and Mass Media and Communication. The report, references, and additional resources to help implement the recommendations can be found at www.arthritis.org/physical-activity.

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