

Health Concerns Checklist



Do You

- Have heart trouble?
- Have chest pains or pain on your left side (neck, shoulder, or arm) or breathlessness when you are physically active?
- Often feel faint or have dizzy spells?
- Have high blood pressure?
- Have bone or joint problems that could worsen if you are physically active?
- Are you age 50 and have not been physically active?

If you can answer **no to all**, you can probably participate in this program with no problem.

If you answer **yes to any**, you should probably check with your health care practitioner before participating.

Walk With Ease Program Goals



- Understand the basics about arthritis and the relationship between arthritis, exercise, and pain
- Learn how to exercise safely and comfortably
- Use methods to make walking fun
- Make a doable personal walking plan with realistic goals for improved fitness
- Gather tips, strategies and resources that will help you to “stick with it,” even when you don’t feel like exercising or things get in your way
- Learn about other programs and resources that can help you keep up your walking and even branch out to other programs that other people with arthritis enjoy

Exercise Dos and Don'ts



- ✓ Do build a program that includes the three different kinds of exercise: flexibility, strengthening, and cardiovascular.
- ✓ Do walk when you have the least pain and stiffness.
- ✓ Do walk when you're not tired.
- ✓ Do walk when your medicine (if you're taking any) is having its greatest effect.
- ✓ Do always include a warm-up and a cool-down whenever you walk.
- ✓ Do start at your own ability level, move slowly and gently, and progress gradually.
- ✓ Do avoid becoming chilled or overheated when walking.
- ✓ Do use heat, cold, and other strategies to minimize pain.
- ✓ Do use aids, like walking sticks or canes, if they help.
- ✓ Do expect that walking may cause some discomfort.
- ✗ Don't do too much, too soon. Start slowly and gradually.
- ✗ Don't hold your breath when doing anything! Remember, keep breathing.
- ✗ Don't take extra medicine before walking to relieve or prevent joint or muscle pain unless prescribed by your health care practitioner.
- ✗ Don't walk so fast or far that you have more pain two hours after you finish than before you started (the 2-Hour Pain Rule).

The 2-Hour Pain Rule

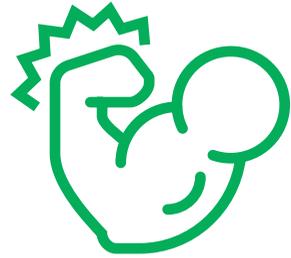
Your pain should not be worse two hours after you exercise than before you started. If it is, cut back.



Frequency



Intensity



Time



Type



Developing Your Walking Plan

1. Set goals and make a contract.
2. Keep records.
3. Use self-tests to measure progress.
4. Check your plan every week.
5. Reward yourself!
6. Make a new contract.



Techniques for Coping with Pain and Discomfort with Exercise

3-Step Problem-solving Strategy

1. Focus on the problem that is most on your mind.
2. Ask yourself: “What might be causing this problem?”
3. Try out different solutions.

Now

- Use heat and/or cold
- Gentle self- massage
- Use Two-Hour Pain Rule (cut back?)
- Use medicines*
- Focus on something else
- Change your self-talk
- Reinterpret your sensations
- Relabel your symptoms

Long-term

- Maintain an appropriate weight
- Use elastic supports or braces
- Use a walking stick or cane*
- Use a shoe insert or orthotic*

*Consult your health care practitioner

Pick the Right Surface! Go for Level I

Level I: Flat, firm surfaces such as school tracks, streets with sidewalks, shopping malls, fitness trails, or quiet neighborhoods. (Most people with arthritis should select Level I surfaces when walking as a cardiovascular exercise.)



Level II: Some inclines or stairs, somewhat uneven ground such as sand, gravel, or soft earth.



Level III: Hills, very uneven ground with very loose gravel or stones, or lots of stairs. (Most people with arthritis should avoid Level III surfaces when walking as a cardiovascular exercise.)



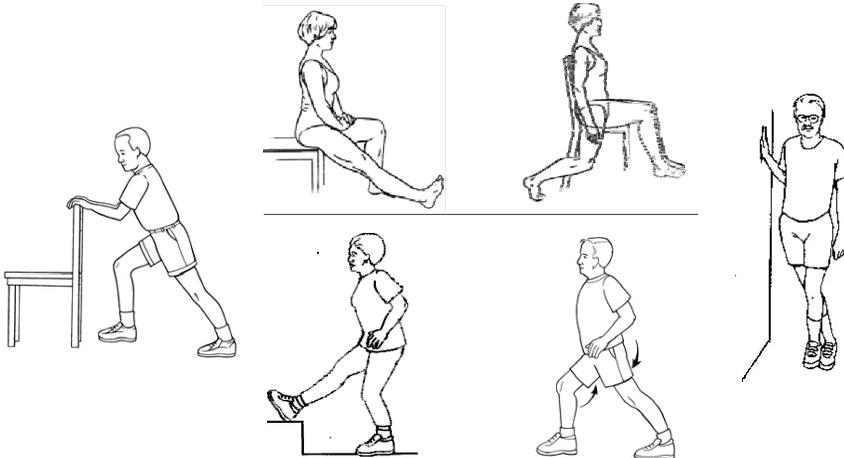
The Walking Progression Chart

Week	Duration	Time/Week
1	10 minutes	3–5
2	15 minutes	3–5
3	20 minutes	3–5
4	25 minutes	3–5
5	30 minutes	3–5
6	35 to 40 minutes	3–5

The 5-Step Basic Walking Pattern

1. Warm up: Start walking slowly.

2. Gently stretch.



3. Start walking and speed up.

4. Cool down.

5. Gently stretch again.

More Tips for Walking Safely

Watch for serious danger signs

- severe pain
- pressure, tightness, or pain in your chest
- nausea
- difficulty with breathing
- dizziness
- severe trembling
- light-headedness

Watch your exertion level (and slow down) if you have

- cramps or stitches in your side
- very red face
- sudden paling or blanching
- profuse sweating
- facial expression signifying distress
- extreme tiredness
- 2-Hour Pain Rule

And more . . .

- Know your body's normal reaction to exercise.
- Go to the bathroom before you start.
- Drink enough liquids.
- Plan for contingencies.
- Pace yourself.
- It's o.k. to exercise when you're menstruating.

Good Body Mechanics



- Head up.
- Shoulders relaxed but not hunched.
- Lungs. Breathe deeply from your diaphragm.
- Stomach. Tighten your muscles a little.
- Arms. Swing naturally and easily, opposite to your legs.
- Hands. Don't clench; relax them.
- Legs. Take regular, natural steps (not too long).

Key Points About Osteoarthritis



- **Joints** need to be moved regularly and taken through their full range of motion several times a day to maintain flexibility. Observe safety precautions, but avoid babying joints.
 - ▶ **Overloaded joints.** If you have osteoarthritis in your hips or knees, avoid exercise that overloads these joints, such as climbing or very fast walking. After exercise try to rest off your feet to give cartilage time to decompress.
 - ▶ **Precautions for artificial joints.** Consult your health care practitioner before attempting any stretching or strengthening exercises for that part of your body, and take precautions he or she recommends to help the joint last as long as possible.
- **Moderate activity.** Just as too much rest is bad for joints with osteoarthritis, so is too much activity. Alternate activity and rest throughout the day.
- **Exercise and rest.** Strike a balance between getting enough exercise and getting enough rest. Follow the 2-Hour Pain Rule: your pain should not worsen two hours after you exercise than before you started. Cut back, if necessary.
- **Good shoes and posture.** Always practice good posture and wear supportive shoes.
- **Strengthening exercises.** Do strengthening exercises to tone your muscles that support your joints, particularly in your hips, knees, and ankles.
- **Body weight.** Keep your weight under control. Extra weight speeds up damage to joints.

Key Points About Rheumatoid Arthritis



First, or when in doubt, consult your health care practitioner.

- **Flares.** Rest as needed, but be sure to continue doing very gentle movements, including gentle range-of-motion exercises. Consult your health care practitioner for recommendations.
 - ▶ **Aquatic exercise** can usually be continued, because the buoyancy of the water helps support joints, making movement easier.
- **Low-impact exercise.** When your symptoms are under control, doing a low-impact weight-bearing activity like walking is important for your overall health. When you have flares, cut back as necessary, but gradually work up to a full program as soon as you can.
- **Flexibility and strengthening exercises.** When you aren't having a flare, do regular flexibility and strengthening exercises to maintain range of motion and strengthen supporting muscles.
- **Posture and joint motion.** Maintaining good posture and joint motion during exercise helps ease joint pain and avoid tightness.
- **Maintaining mobility.** You may not feel like exercising, especially during flares, but movement helps prevent loss of mobility. Be sure your exercise is appropriate, and be sure to do it!

Key Points about Fibromyalgia



- A specific combination of exercises can help you reduce muscle tension, decrease pain, and aid relaxation.
- Participate regularly in low- intensity aerobic activity to improve conditioning and maintain good circulation.
- Do stretching exercises (carefully) before and after your aerobic activity to avoid muscle or joint strains and maintain good range of motion.
- Observe recommendations for exercise to avoid the possibility of minor injuries.
- Start slowly! Be aware that fibromyalgia symptoms often get worse—not better—with vigorous exercise. Do only low- to moderate-intensity exercise, and avoid fast movements or high impact.

Strengthening Exercises



Standing Back
Leg Lift



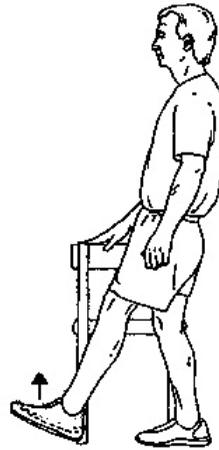
Heel & Toe



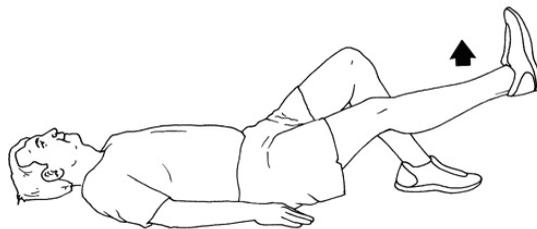
Mini-Squat



Quadriceps, Seated



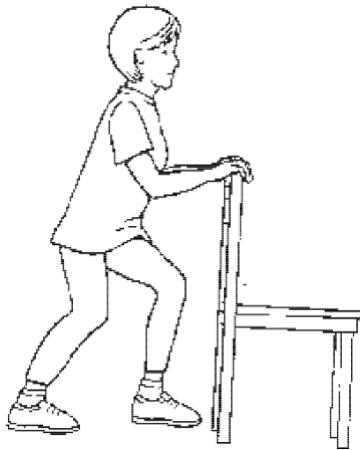
Quadriceps, Standing



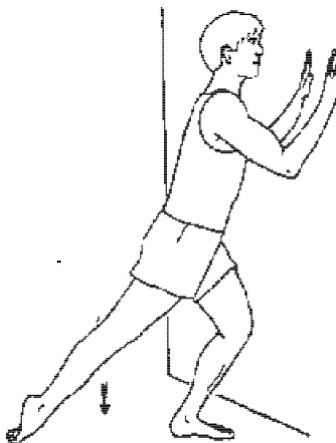
Quadriceps, Lying Down
(you may add weights)

Some Additional Stretches to Try at Home

Instructions for these and other
stretches and strengthening
exercises are in **Appendix B**



Bent leg calf stretch



Front of Calf and Toe Stretch

Endorsed Programs for People with Arthritis

- The Arthritis Foundation
 - ▶ Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program
 - ▶ Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program
 - ▶ Tai Chi
 - ▶ Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Program
 - ▶ Call 1-800-283-7800 or visit their website at arthritis.org
- **Centers for Disease Control Arthritis Program**
 - ▶ EnhanceFitness (EF) (formerly Lifetime Fitness)
 - ▶ Chronic Disease Self-Management Program
 - ▶ cdc.gov/arthritis/intervention/index.htm
- **AARP**
 - ▶ Get Fit on Route 66
 - ▶ Step Up to Better Health
 - ▶ aarp.org/walking

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