

Arthritis Foundation® Leader Links

An Inspirational Story

Why We Do What We Do

Helen Oktavec—One of the 46 Million Reasons



The Rocky Mountain Chapter participants

Program was a safe course of action.

Helen began attending Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program two times a week and overcame many obstacles to continue the program, including seeking transportation from friends and family to the pool as she had lost her license due to her severe osteoporosis. Within a few weeks, Helen began feeling stronger and more energetic. After a year of participation in the class, Helen was once again able to drive herself to and from her classes. Recognizing that others had similar difficulties, Helen organized “car pool to the pool” and soon had a full car to each class.

Mrs. Oktavec said “I can’t thank the Arthritis Foundation (enough), particularly the Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program, for giving me my independence and confidence back! I am so thankful that I can not only do (this) for myself, but can now help others. My children and grandchildren are so proud of me!”

In 1996, Helen Oktavec’s physician advised her that she needed to do more weight-bearing exercises due to her severe osteoporosis. After discussing her options with her doctor, they decided the Arthritis Foundation Aquatic

Keeping Class Exciting

Looking for new ways to keep your Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program participants engaged and learning? Here are some suggestions of how to add new excitement to your program.

- Increasing number of participants: Although we all love our regular participants, consider more advertising at your facility, press release, radio ad, etc. Contact your local chapter for resources to help add new faces to your classes.
- Adding an educational piece: www.arthritis.org has a vast amount of information, including the latest research, alternative medicines, events from your local chapter, tips on healthy living and much more. Bring in a different fact or tip to your class each week. Or, if you are following the “Health Education Lesson Plan” from your manual, contact your local chapter for brochures and handouts.
- Combining exercises: Combine exercises so you are doing multiple exercises at once, or add a new routine that keeps their mind active, for example: 4 head turns, 5 shoulder shrugs, 3 sideways arm reach, 6 door openers and repeat!

Check your manual: Your instructor manual is an excellent resource for you with pre-made-routines, tips on effective teaching, medical aspects of arthritis and more. If you are an Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program instructor, don’t forget the breathing/relaxation portion. Your manual was created for you to use as an instructor, go back to it and see what can enhance your class.

National Office Updates

Arthritis Foundation is now a recognized continuing education provider for Aquatic Exercise Association. Courses for 2008:

- Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program
- JA & Deep Water
- Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program
- The Arthritis Foundation Tai Chi Program

Visit the Offering Programs page on the Arthritis Foundation’s website: <http://www.arthritis.org/offering-programs.php> for more information on how to become an instructor of more programs and to have a facility become a partner facility with the Arthritis Foundation!

ANSWERLinks**Questions to your Answers!**

As we often receive the same question from many instructors, we have compiled a few of these with responses for you. We hope this is of some help in the delivery of your courses and the processes used by instructors across the system.

Q How do I find a CPR re-certification class?

A Both the American Red Cross and the American Heart Association are good sources. Both offer online information as well as telephonic:

- American Red Cross: www.redcross.org
 - Select “Get Trained”
 - Contact your local chapter for classes near you
 - Or call 1 800-RED-CROSS, option 5
- American Heart Association: www.americanheart.org
 - CPR/ECC
 - Find a class near you
 - Register online or call 1-877-AHA-4CPR

Q What is required for me to obtain official Arthritis Foundation certification for the course I’ll teach?

- A**
- Obtain signed Co-Sponsorship Agreement from facility
 - Satisfy training prerequisites and sign Statement of Understanding
 - Successfully complete an AF training workshop
 - Within 6 months of training, instruct 6 class sessions of your AF program
 - Submit the required course data to AF (As of 2008: Participant Roster, Participant Release forms for all NEW participants and Program Information form)
 - Submit signed Certification Application Form which includes Leader Instructor Agreement

Please contact your local chapter for documents, or visit www.arthritis.org.

Reminders!

Evidence-based Programs are vital components of the Arthritis Foundation! Turn in your attendance sheets to your chapter– to help the Foundation keep track of how many people we are reaching through our programs!

Future AF Leader Links Newsletters will be sent electronically– please make sure your local chapter has your e-mail address so that you can stay linked in!

Congratulations!**You are a trained Arthritis Foundation Exercise Instructor... Now what?**

How do you find participants for your program? If you are employed by a facility that already advertises and has other on-going programs - that is great. If you are not, things are a little harder. Either way, reaching out to people that have arthritis is paramount for the success of your program. Enter marketing – not just advertising. What else are you doing to get the word out about your program?

An excellent way of getting the word out is through 45-60 minute seminars about arthritis. Before starting a program at a new site, hold an informational seminar about arthritis.

For an introductory seminar, explain what RA and OA are and their differences. There is a handy reference chart in your manual that can be utilized for this.

Next, you should explain the structure of a healthy joint and that of a diseased joint. Again, there are drawings of these in your manual that you could utilize. Also, explain why exercise is important to improving joint function and reducing pain.

Usually people with arthritis are afraid to exercise. Using brochures and tear sheets from the AF, demonstrate the exercises. When they experience how easy it is to do these exercises and they understand how important exercising is for their health, they become more open to a regularly scheduled program.

Now is the time for you to explain that the AF has designed exercise programs that meet the special requirements of individuals with arthritis and that these classes are taught by trained professionals (such as yourself). Let them know when and where your class will be held and pass out a flyer with the details for them to take along. Answer any questions that they may have and congratulations, you’ve completed your first informational/recruiting seminar.

Contact your local chapter for existing powerpoint presentations on arthritis and physical activity.

Check it Out!

CVS pharmacy has the Senior Health Organizer available to promote the Senior Health and Fitness Day on May 28th.

The Senior Health Organizer includes special offers and coupons. There is also an ad for our Life Improvement Series Programs!

Editorial Board

Marjorie Chepp - *Wisconsin Chapter*
Mary Major - *Maryland Chapter Volunteer*
Kathi Deresinski - *Greater Chicago Chapter*

Patty Rech - *Georgia Chapter*
Suzanne Gauthier - *Massachusetts Chapter*
Isabelle Stohler - *Rocky Mountain Chapter*

Jeannine Galloway - *National Office*