

Arthritis Foundation® Leader Links

New Program in Life Improvement Series! *Walk with Ease*



Have you heard the buzz? Walk With Ease (WWE), a new Arthritis Foundation program, is operating in several states and the results are great.

WWE is an excellent choice for individuals who are just starting an exercise routine. The program allows small groups to progressively increase the duration of exercise over a six-week period. The

course teaches participants stretching and strengthening exercises and introduces them to healthy living choices while providing motivation and helping them set — and reach — fitness goals.

Several regions were chosen to pilot this program, partnering with such groups as senior centers, churches, recreation departments, community centers, tribal clinics, schools and workplaces. Participants had this to say about WWE:

- "I'd recommend to people, even if they don't have arthritis."
- "I enjoyed the pep talks from the staff and the other walkers."
- "I enjoyed the program and hope we could get it again. I was depressed before and walking did me good. I'm starting to enjoy life better."

If you're already an AFEP or AFAP instructor, you would make an excellent WWE instructor. Contact your local AF office for more information if you're interested in becoming certified or if your facility would like to offer WWE. It's an excellent introduction to exercise programs for participants looking to make life changes and set goals in the new year.

Please Don't Shake My Hands

Physical touch conveys empathy, shows connection, and raises the self-esteem of those on the receiving end. But for people with various forms of arthritis, including osteoarthritis, the simple act of shaking hands can cause unbearable pain. Many people find themselves apologizing for not shaking hands at social events. Some people avoid social situations, fearing they will have to choose between making awkward excuses for not shaking or paying a painful price if they do.

Here are some safe ways to shake hands:

- Use the "arthritis handshake" (grasp the forearm instead of the hand).
- Offer the hand web down so knuckles cannot be compressed.
- Occupy the affected hand with an object such as a handkerchief or pen so the unaffected hand is the only option.
- If the right hand is affected, offer the left hand. That may confuse the shaker and lead to a gentler grip.
- Explain that shaking hands is painful, but acknowledge the greeting warmly.

Maintaining Attendance

Participants in Life Improvement Series (LIS) programs show a decrease in pain and fatigue and an increase in flexibility and range of motion. Research also shows the LIS promotes a sense of social support and higher self efficacy for individuals.

Exercising in a group fosters a sense of belonging among participants; motivates individuals to attend class; and provides a natural support system. Self efficacy is the belief an individual holds about their ability to produce a desired result. A low sense of self efficacy can cause someone to doubt her abilities and shy away from goals. A strong sense of self efficacy enhances self accomplishment and personal well-being.

You may already know this, but do your participants? As holiday stress and demand on participants' time increase, you'll need to remind them why it's important to keep attending class. And remember: Your class is beneficial – keep up the great work!

Making Your Class Exciting Your “Recipe” For Success

Instructors in all Arthritis Foundation Life Improvement Series programs share a common goal – motivating students while keeping class safe, exciting and fun! We'll be listing a complete “recipe” in each issue of *Leader Links* to suggest creative, easy implemented ways to achieve these goals.

IDEA: Functional Fitness: Movement with Meaning
“Training” your body to handle Activities of Daily Living (ADL)

TOOLS: AFAP & AFEP Instructor’s Manual and your participants

HOW TO: Use imagery to incorporate exercises that mimic or assist with ADL. Have your class form a circle and take turns suggesting ADL they need to work on – you may need to keep your manual close to provide appropriate exercises for each suggestion. Keep the “FUN” in functional fitness ... every exercise has a purpose!

Let’s Clean the House – Instead of traditional cueing (reach and stretch) try this: “Reach as though you’re trying to put a clean glass on the top shelf.”

Let’s Go Shopping – Focus on movements that help with getting in and out of the car (hip turn, inner thigh stretch, mini squat) and movements associated with driving and changing lanes (head turn).

Good Morning – Begin with yawning (jaw open), wake up stretch (shoulder blade pinch), walking to the kitchen (forward walk, march), making breakfast (stir the soup), eating breakfast (elbow bend) etc.

Holiday Shopping – cross the street (head turn), (trunk rotation), holding packages (forward arm reach), make sure you don’t fall (march).

RESOURCES: Your AFAP or AFEP Instructor’s Manuals have “Key to Purposes” listed in the exercise descriptions, which include samples of typical ADL that may be improved by doing each exercise.

Please let us know how YOU are keeping your class safe, exciting and fun!

ANSWERLinks

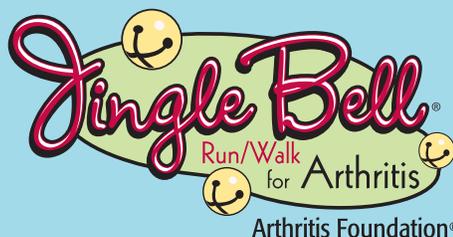
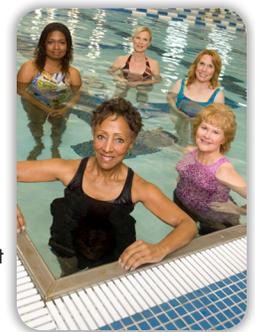
Q Why all the paper work?

A The Data Collection Forms and STTB – “Stick to the Book” rule associated with the Arthritis Foundation Life Improvement Series are designed to ensure a safe, beneficial experience for participants while providing you legal protection and accountability. Completing Program Co-sponsorship Agreements, your Certification Application form, Program Information Forms and Participant Release Forms is crucial to establishing general liability and coverage of yourself as a leader/instructor and your facility when you teach an AF class. The Program Information Form lets the AF know when classes occur and who is attending, providing accurate reporting to funding agencies and supporters. The Program Release Form places self-responsibility on the participant, which protects the Arthritis Foundation, instructors/leaders and agencies from risk of legal liability. Contact your local AF office with any questions about these forms.

Get Motivated!

What are participants saying about Life Improvement Series Programs?

- “I felt so good after we exercised on Monday and I didn’t hurt at all the rest of the day.”
- “At first I thought, ‘This exercise is nothing, what good is this going to do for me?’ I had some muscle soreness after last week and now I know I am gaining strength. This makes me feel good.”
- “I LOVE how Tai Chi makes me feel.”
- “I have had very bad balance problems, but I can tell I am getting stronger and my balance is getting better from doing these exercises.”



A Jingle Bell Run/Walk is a fun and festive way to kick off the holidays with family, friends and coworkers. Form a team, raise funds and organize your very own holiday-themed costumes.

Then tie jingle bells to your shoelaces, and complete a 5 kilometer route. Contact your local office or visit www.arthritis.org for more information!

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