

Arthritis Foundation® Leader Links

Tips to Market Your AF Program

Marketing your program can help increase the number of participants and broaden the program's reach. Here are some sound strategies you can use:

- ▶ Send your program information to the AF before your class begins and some local offices will be able to add it to their program listing.
- ▶ Distribute program-specific press releases that you can use with local newspapers or for online postings — just ask the AF program staff!
- ▶ If the facility where you teach publishes a print, email or online newsletter, make sure your class information is in each issue.
- ▶ Send program specific flyers to the facility where your class is taught. You can obtain them from AF program staff.
- ▶ Spread the word: Ask participants to bring a friend or tell at least one friend why they come to your class and why they should come, too.
- ▶ Partner with community organizations. Perhaps a local assisted living facility that transports residents to events would be interested in adding your class to its scheduled outings.
- ▶ Host an open house or offer a free class day. Distribute flyers at local community centers to attract more participants to your event.

Arthritis and Massage

Have you ever considered a massage? Anyone who's had a good back rub knows it is a pleasant way to unwind. Massage can also help ease arthritis symptoms.

Recent studies have shown that the regular use of simple massage therapy may lead to improvements in pain, stiffness, range of motion, hand grip strength and overall joint function. There are numerous types of massage, but those most likely to help relieve arthritis symptoms include:

- ▶ **Swedish Massage** – the use of long smooth strokes, kneading, and circular movements on superficial layers of muscle using lotion or oil.
- ▶ **Deep Tissue Massage** – the use of slower strokes or friction techniques across the grain of the muscle that targets the deeper layers of muscle.
- ▶ **Hot Stone Massage** – the use of heated, smooth stones placed on certain points on the body to warm and loosen tight muscles.

The purpose of massage is to enhance the recipient's general health and well-being. Remember: Massage isn't medicine. It's a complement to doctor-prescribed arthritis treatments.



Track + React

There are powerful connections between what you do and how you feel. Track + React, the Arthritis Foundation's new, easy-to-use online wellness tool, is specifically designed to help people with arthritis understand and better manage their disease.

You and your participants can track several different factors that influence their arthritis symptoms, including nutrition, physical activity, stress levels, medication, sleep quality, and more in a fully private environment.

Track + React users can then see the results of their efforts on the Arthritis Impact Graph. The graph can be printed and shared with their doctor to view trends over time and help manage their arthritis.

Visit www.ArthritisToday.org/TrackandReact to learn more.

Looking at Arthritis Glass Half Full

When the general public thinks of arthritis, the words pain and stiffness come to mind. AF program instructors know that while the physical symptoms are formidable, the disease's impact goes much further. Often, the emotional costs and losses of arthritis must be addressed before participants can focus on improving physical abilities.

The Chronic Symptom Cycle we use in our programs clearly points out the losses experienced by people with arthritis. And while acknowledging these losses is important, consider looking at things from a different angle, and focusing on the positive impact of arthritis.

Encourage participants in a health education session to share their "arthritis gains" — things they would not otherwise have learned or done before they had arthritis. One participant loved to garden, but could no longer plant things in the ground or move heavy planters and equipment. Switching to container plantings has enabled her to continue her love of gardening — despite her arthritis.

This discussion is yet another way to encourage your participants to become more proactive and "take control" of their arthritis.

Leaders, Come Jingle With Us!



Not only does the Jingle Bell Run/Walk raise funds to help further the Arthritis Foundation's mission, it's a great way to share your holiday spirit!

As an AF program leader, you can help by

forming your own Jingle Bell Run/Walk team, tying jingle bells to your shoelaces, and walking or running the 3-mile course. You can also encourage your class participants to get involved by forming their own team or volunteering at the event. For more information, please contact your local office or visit arthritis.org.

Recipe for Success

Instructors in all AF programs share a common goal — motivating their students while keeping class safe, exciting and fun! We are listing a complete "recipe" in each issue of Leader Links to suggest creative new ways to achieve these goals.

IDEA: "Keep the 'Ho Ho Ho' Throughout the Holidays" The holiday season is fast approaching. Here are a few ways to add a bit of holiday cheer to your classes.

TOOLS: Calendar, You, AFAP, WWE, Tai Chi & AFEP Instructor's Manuals and participants.

HOW TO: Celebrate the holidays by including fun activities during your classes and providing opportunities for participants to share their enthusiasm. Here are a few holiday-themed suggestions:

October: Encourage participants to wear "costumes," even if it's just a funny hat, silly glasses or a goofy mask.

November: Have participants form a "thankful circle." Ask each person to select an exercise they would like to share with the group and tell the circle one thing they are thankful for.

December: Celebrate the holidays by getting participants together for a "Merry Fitness and a Happy New You Lunch."

New Year's: Suggest that participants wear top hats and tiaras. Encourage them to write down one resolution or goal for the coming year, and use these to create future lesson plans. "Toast" the New Year with ginger ale and noisemakers after class.

RESOURCES: Check your instructor's manuals for other theme suggestions that might spark your creativity. The Dollar Store, Party City, Oriental Trading and Hallmark shops are great places to find materials.

ADDITIONAL INFO: Don't forget to document your celebrations with notes and photos.

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

National Office Updates

- Thanks to your great suggestions, a Walk With Ease Facebook page is now available. It provides a place where participants can talk to each other and find encouragement, as well as a Discussion Board where leaders can share class tips and ideas. "Like" the page today at www.Facebook.com/WalkWithEase.
- Updated program brochures are available to help you market your program in the community. Order yours today.

Happy Holidays From The Leader Links Editorial Board

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