



1. What is the Walk with Ease Program?

The Arthritis Foundation *Walk with Ease* Program is a community-based physical activity and self-management education program. It can be done by individuals using the *Walk with Ease* workbook on their own, or by groups led by trained leaders. Both the individual and group formats are set up as a structured six-week program. While walking is the central activity, *Walk with Ease* is a multi-component program that also includes health education, stretching and strengthening exercises, and motivational strategies. Group sessions include socialization time, pre-walk informational lecturettes, warm up and cool downs and a 10-35 minute walking period.

2. What are the program goals and objectives?

The overall goals of the *Walk With Ease* Program are threefold:

- to promote education about successful physical activity for people with arthritis
- to promote education about arthritis self-management and walking safely and comfortably
- to encourage participants to continue their walking program and explore other exercise and self-management programs that deliver proven benefits for people with arthritis.

By the end of the six-week program period, participants will:

- 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 to help them overcome barriers and continue to be physically active
- Learn about other programs and resources that can help maintain walking and other physical activity.

3. What is the target population?

Walk with Ease was specifically developed for adults with arthritis who want to be more physically active. The program is also appropriate for people without arthritis, particularly those with diabetes, heart disease and other chronic conditions, who want to get more active. The only pre-requisite is the ability to be on your feet for at least 10 minutes without increased pain.

4. What are the essential program components and activities?

The essential program components are:

- **Walking** (10-35 minutes walking duration)
- **Health education information**
 - All participants receive the *Walk With Ease* workbook which is organized in a logical sequence to provide the information needed to help participants get ready to walk, begin walking, and stay motivated to continue walking. Both the Workbook and the corresponding lecturettes conducted during the group sessions provide basic information on arthritis, managing pain and stiffness, tips on proper clothing and equipment, self-monitoring for physical problems, what to do when exercise hurts, and how to anticipate and overcome barriers to being physically active.
- **Stretching and Strengthening Exercises**
 - Both the individual and the group participants are encouraged to do stretching exercises when they walk and strengthening exercises twice a week. The *Walk With Ease* workbook includes directions for the stretching and strengthening exercises. Individuals can also access video demonstrations of these exercises on the Arthritis Foundation's *Let's Move Together* website (www.letsmovetogether.org)
 - During the group classes:
 - Stretching exercises are incorporated into the warm up and cool down periods.
 - Strengthening exercises are demonstrated once during the group class and participants are encouraged to do these at home.
- **Motivational Tips and Tools**
 - The *Walk With Ease* workbook includes self-tests, a six week contract and walking diary forms to help participants identify their needs and interests, to set goals and rewards, and to track progress. Each workbook chapter also contains motivational tips.
 - The group classes review these tools and encourage their use throughout the program.
 - An online support component is also available to individual and group participants. The Arthritis Foundation's *Let's Move Together* website (www.letsmovetogether.org) provides several resources:
 - A Movement Tracker to track amount of time spent walking
 - Copies of the self-tests and motivational worksheets in the *Walk With Ease* workbook
 - Video instruction for the stretching and strengthening exercises
 - Ability to build actual or virtual teams

- A message board where participants can share their experiences
- Positive feedback through automated emails when participants reach certain milestones.

5. What is the length/ timeframe of the program?

- Both the individual and the group format are structured as six-week walking programs.
- Individuals using the workbook on their own are encouraged to work up to walking at least three times a week and to utilize all of the resources in the workbook over a six-week period.
- The group format classes meet three times a week for six weeks (a total of 18 sessions).
- Depending on the physical capabilities of the group and the amount of time they spend socializing before and after classes, the average class session length may last as little as 45 minutes in the beginning weeks of the program but may increase to an hour or more as the group improves their fitness level. The standardized scripts for the class sessions suggest that the walking time progresses an additional 5 minutes each week, as the group capability allows.

6. What is the recommended class size?

The recommended class size is 12-15 participants per leader. Groups may have more than one leader.

7. What evaluation data is available?

Walk With Ease was recently updated and evaluated by the Thurston Arthritis Research Center and Institute on Aging at the University of North Carolina. A rigorous scientific trial with 462 individuals from 31 rural and urban communities found that both the self-directed and group formats were safe and effective. Program participants experienced decreased disability; improvements in levels of pain, fatigue, stiffness and self-confidence; and better perceived control over arthritis, balance, strength and walking pace.

8. What are the leader requirements?

When recruiting individuals to undergo the *Walk with Ease* leader training, look for applicants with the following characteristics:

- Current certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is required; first aid certification is strongly recommended. (Although not required as a pre-requisite, first aid certification is strongly recommended because of the danger of falls or other injuries, especially when the program is conducted outdoors. Chapters and cosponsoring agencies are encouraged to provide information about first aid training opportunities available within their areas.)

- Affiliation with a facility or organization that can provide space for the classes and insurance coverage for the program is desirable.
- Other desirable abilities include:
 - Empathy toward people with arthritis and related diseases, gained through personal or professional experience.
 - Interest in working with groups of people with arthritis and related diseases.
 - Experience in teaching physical activity classes and skill in group process and instructional techniques.
 - Desire and ability to help others.
 - Strong belief in the value of regular physical activity.

Existing Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program instructors are ideal candidates to become *Walk With Ease* leaders as there are many similarities in the two programs' health education and exercise components.

9. How do leaders get trained?

There are two options for training:

- The in-person training is a 3-4 hour workshop.
- An online training module will be available by April, 2010. Applicants will need to contact the Arthritis Foundation to obtain the access information.

10. Will the Arthritis Foundation provide a Walk with Ease leader certification?

Yes. Certification as an Arthritis Foundation *Walk With Ease* Program Leader requires:

- Successful completion of an Arthritis Foundation *Walk With Ease* Program Leader Training Workshop online or in-person training workshop.
- Teaching at least one six-week Arthritis Foundation *Walk With Ease* Program class series within six months of completing the Leader Training Workshop and submitting participant data (release forms and program information form) to the Arthritis Foundation.
- Teaching at least one class series annually and submitting participant data to the Arthritis Foundation.

Leaders remain certified as long as they continue to teach at least one class series per year and send in their participant data to the Arthritis Foundation.

11. Who can become a trainer?

- Existing Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program trainers are eligible to be *Walk with Ease* trainers by participating in a special orientation webinar available by April, 2010. If you want to offer in-person training workshops, recruit an existing Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program trainer to either participate in this webinar or listen to the recording afterward. Participation in the webinar will be verified through the completion of a post-test by the trainer.
- The Arthritis Foundation will explore other options for training additional trainers if the need arises.

12. How will the program be promoted?

- The Arthritis Foundation *Walk with Ease* Program will be promoted nationally through the Arthritis Foundation's web site and ongoing media placements. In April 2010, articles about the program will appear in the *Arthritis Today* magazine and in *Family Circle*.
- To help Arthritis Foundation field offices and their partners promote the program, a *Walk with Ease* marketing brochure is available from the AF National Office. A media kit with a sample news release has also been produced as part of the Implementation Guide and a fact sheet is included in the Leader's Guide. The brochure, media kit and fact sheet are also included on the Program CD.
- AF field offices and their partners who develop their own promotional materials should include the full program name, Arthritis Foundation *Walk With Ease* Program and/or the new program logo. If marketing to a mixed audience that includes people with other conditions besides arthritis, the title *Walk With Ease* may be used, along with a subtitle such as "An Arthritis Foundation Program" or the Arthritis Foundation logo on the same page or same context.

13. What are the program costs?

The program costs depend upon the number of classes offered and leaders trained. Below are some typical costs to get the program started:

- Costs to train leaders (can choose to offer online OR in-person workshop or both):
 - On-line training workshop—registration fee is \$50, including materials
 - In-person training workshop expenses:
 - Meeting room rental, LCD projector rental, refreshments (if not provided by site)
 - Trainer travel/ honorarium (if appropriate)
 - Set of materials for trainer: *Walk with Ease* Trainer's Guide and program CD: \$6.95 plus shipping and handling
 - Set of materials for each trainee: *Walk with Ease* Leader's Guide and Posters \$15.14 plus shipping and handling
 - Optional materials to provide each host agency: program CD \$1.99 and Implementation Guide \$4.53 plus shipping and handling
- Participant/ class costs:
 - *Walk with Ease* participant workbooks: \$5 each— chapter cost plus shipping and handling
 - Each group leader needs a Leader's Guide and set of posters (provided after training)
 - Optional costs for group classes: any leader honorarium/fees, facility fees, refreshments, incentive items
- General costs:
 - Staff member (amount of time dependent upon scope of program) to coordinate recruiting and managing partners, training logistics, and collaborating with partner sites on leader recruitment, kickoff events or other promotional activities, class logistics and data entry into Team Approach
 - Kick-off event and other promotional costs

14. What are the facility requirements?

Any host agencies offering the **group** classes should provide:

- An accessible site for the program consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act and any reasonable accommodation that may be necessary to ensure that the program is accessible to people with disabilities.
- A safe and accessible place to walk either inside (e.g. indoor track, gymnasium, mall, etc.) or outside (e.g., neighborhood, walking trail, etc.)
- Adequate general liability insurance (industry standard is \$1 million)
- A signed program co-sponsorship form, documenting their understanding of their responsibilities

15. How will the program be monitored?

- All agencies offering the **group** classes will be expected to send participant release forms and a program information form or equivalent data on the number of classes and participants to the Arthritis Foundation. Some classes may continue to meet after the initial six-week session. However, only new enrollee participants should be counted and reported.
- AF chapters may count **individual** participants whose name and address have been captured and entered into Team Approach and who complete and return an individual participant evaluation form. The AF and CDC will be exploring other ways of counting individual participants during the pilot test period.
- The in-person and online training workshops for leaders include post- evaluations.
- Other evaluation and monitoring tools that AF chapters and partnering agencies may choose to use on an optional basis are the use of attendance records and post-program evaluations.

16. What is our risk for liability if someone is injured during a class?

- The Arthritis Foundation's participant release form has been updated to provide protection if someone is injured even if the walking program occurs outdoors. This protection is designed to minimize risk for the AF, agencies that have signed a program co-sponsorship agreement, and trained leaders. It is very important that every group participant sign the release form.
- Any agencies hosting the *Walk with Ease* group classes are expected to sign the program co-sponsorship agreement indicating that they have adequate liability insurance.
- The leader training workshops cover how to provide a safe walking environment. Leaders are also encouraged to obtain basic first aid training.