

# The New York Arthritis Reporter

Arthritis Foundation, Inc., New York Chapter • 122 East 42nd Street • New York, New York 10168-1898 • (212) 984-8700

## Exercise: the Effective and Affordable Rx

"It's amazing how many people do not appreciate that a joint is an organ just as much as a heart or lung; and that exercise is essential to its functioning properly," said Dr. Natalie Azar, Clinical Instructor of Medicine at NYU Medical Center. "People will exercise for cosmetic reasons—to lose weight or flatten stomachs, or after admonitions from their doctor to strengthen their heart or respiratory system, but the connection isn't often made between exercise and healthy joints."

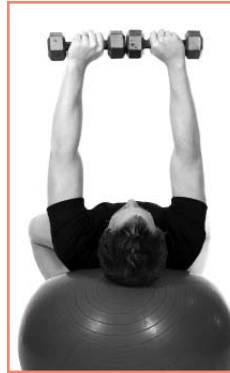
Among the complaints heard most often are painful knees from osteoarthritis (OA), the most common form of arthritis. Painful knees result not just from loss of cartilage causing joint space narrowing and "bone rubbing on bone," but also from other structural problems such as ligament loosening, muscle weakness, etc. Obese patients are at an even greater risk of developing painful knee OA secondary to the mechanical wear and tear that increased weight confers. Patients with knee OA will often complain of worsening symptoms when descending stairs, as with each step taken, gravity brings pressure to bear directly on the knee joint, causing pain. They often describe their symptoms as though their knees are going to "give way" and are unable to support them.



"There is no rigorous scientific evidence that pharmacologic interventions are effective for improving this type of OA. The safety of some pain medications has been called into question, and we recently learned that some supplements provide little or no improvement for people with OA; **but the evidence for the efficacy of exercise continues to grow**," Dr. Azar said. "Strengthening the leg muscles, including the quadriceps and hamstrings, helps to provide support for joints, actually improving the mechanics of the movement. This strengthening can be accomplished through regular cardiovascular and simple range-of-motion exercises."

In addition to improving muscle strength around the joints, regular, moderate exercise has many other benefits for people with arthritis, among these are:

- Releases endorphins which are natural pain killers and mood enhancers
- Controls weight by helping to boost metabolism
- Boosts energy by increasing blood flow and keeping arteries open
- Lowers blood pressure
- Improves sleep



- Fights depression by activating the neurotransmitters serotonin and norepinephrine.

Why is it, then, that many people still do not engage in regular exercise? Perhaps the thought of moving something that is painful, or has hurt in the past, prevents many patients from being active; maybe media images of muscle-bound men and women pumping iron and doing crunches discourages the average person from even attempting to start an exercise regime. But, no matter what age you are or how sedentary your lifestyle, you can most certainly benefit from increased activity.

Dr. Azar says that "one of the easiest things to do is to start a walking program...it's inexpensive, can be done anywhere, in all kinds of weather, and requires no equipment other than a pair of sneakers. For range-of-motion exercises, I often recommend simple flex and extension of knees with ankle weights to improve muscle tone—ten repetitions on each leg, three sets each, increasing the weights over time. (These can even be done sitting down.) The main objective is to strengthen the legs, including the quadriceps and hamstring muscles, thereby stabilizing the joint by improving the muscle support around it.



(Continued on page 2)

## Wyeth Renews Grant for Reporter

With the renewal of an educational grant, **Wyeth** is continuing its partnership with the New York Chapter to offer the quarterly newsletter, *The New York Arthritis Reporter*, to Chapter members and constituents. This is the third year of a collaboration that allows over 50,000 readers in the New York region to access information on arthritis research advances, disease management programs, patient services, and other resources available to them. The *Reporter* is also available at Chapter programs and events, and is often displayed in rheumatologists' waiting rooms.

Wyeth's partnership with the Chapter covers a broad spectrum of activities, including support of disease management programs in Spanish as well as public forums on arthritis topics.

This issue is underwritten by an educational grant from Wyeth.

## Centocor Expands Program Partnership

A family symposium focusing on rheumatoid arthritis, a new series of arthritis forums, and improved access for a proven disease management program are all Chapter education projects currently underway thanks to support from **Centocor, Inc.:**

- The **Living with Rheumatoid Arthritis: Treatment Options, Surgical Advances & Health Advocacy** Family Symposium is scheduled for Monday evening, **June 18, at the Lighthouse International Conference Center in Manhattan.** Special features of this symposium are: (1) a discussion of how to improve communication with your healthcare providers, and (2) a session on making educated decisions regarding prescription drug programs and services.
- A series of four **Living Well with Arthritis** forums are being scheduled in the Chapter area during the months of June and July. These forums will cover a variety of topics relating to arthritis – treatments, pain management, and coping skills.
- And the popular **Arthritis Basics for Change (ABC)** program, designed to teach participants self-help techniques to manage pain and improve function, will be accessible at more senior centers and residences throughout Queens, Brooklyn, and Manhattan, with Centocor's help.

For more information about these opportunities to increase your knowledge about arthritis, please call the **New York Arthritis Exchange™** telephone helpline at (212) 984-8730, or from the 914 or 845 area codes only, (800) 246-2884.

## Exercise: the Effective and Affordable Rx (continued from page 1)

Of course, **any exercise program you begin should be first discussed with your physician** and you may seek direction from your doctor or a physical or occupational therapist about which range-of-motion or cardiovascular activities are best for you.



You can learn more about osteoarthritis and exercise by calling the **New York Arthritis**

**Exchange™** telephone helpline, sponsored by Pfizer Inc, at (212) 984-8730, or, from the 914 or 845 area codes only, (800) 246-2884. The **Exchange** offers free brochures, such as: *Osteoarthritis, Walking and Arthritis*, and *Water Exercises*, among others. You can also access information on Arthritis Foundation exercise classes near you. For someone just beginning to exercise, Arthritis Foundation programs are a good way to ease into a routine since they are specially designed for people with arthritis.

## GHI and HIP Offering a Healthy Dose of Prevention

Subscribers of **Group Health Incorporated (GHI)** and **HIP Health Plan of New York (HIP)** are continuing to enjoy free access to a full range of Arthritis Foundation exercise and disease management programs thanks to a renewal of Chapter partnerships with these managed care organizations.

Foundation exercise and self-help programs are designed for people with arthritis and have a track record of proven results. Participants in these courses show statistically significant improvements in numerous arthritis-related outcomes, specifically, a reduction in arthritis symptoms, an increase in arthritis self-care knowledge, more positive feelings towards exercise, and better pain management. Feedback in participant satisfaction surveys attributes these courses and instructors with improving their physical and psychological well-being.

More than 9,000 GHI and HIP subscribers participated in programs including: the *Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program* (offered in English and Spanish), the *Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Program* (offered in English and Spanish), *PACE Active*, *Tai Chi for Arthritis*, and *Osteoporosis and You*.

The Chapter is grateful to GHI and HIP for this opportunity to reach more New Yorkers with arthritis through their managed care network. Classes are offered twice a year in the spring and fall. For information on program availability, please call (212) 984-8730.

## Arthritis Walk 2007



**Savannah Rafferty (third from left) and her teammates lead the way at the Battery Park Arthritis Walk on April 29. Special thanks to Genentech, Inc. for joining our 2007 Battery Park Walk sponsors. Three more Arthritis Walks were held in the New York Chapter area during the month of May. Other Walks are scheduled for the fall, including Saturday, October 27, in Bear Mountain State Park. For additional information on the Arthritis Walk, please contact Tina DiRienzo at (212) 984-8709 or tdirienzo@arthritis.org.**

### NEW YORK CHAPTER

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Copies of our financial and operating report have been filed with the state and are available upon request. To obtain one, write: Office of the Attorney General, Department of Law, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271, or contact us at the address above.

# Questions and Answers

**Theresa Sayers is a New York Chapter volunteer and certified Arthritis Foundation instructor. Before joining the Chapter, she taught high school-level Health and Physical Education for the New York City school system for 32 years.**

**Q: In your experience as an Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program instructor, what are the most gratifying improvements noted in your students?**

**A:** The *Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program* is an hour-long class which meets once a week for eight weeks. What impresses me the most is the heightened mood of class participants as we meet each week. The class brings them together and they really seem to enjoy each others' company. It is also gratifying to see the progress they make as they go along...the movements are better executed. The individuals in the class become progressively more confident.

I like to teach with music. We begin each session with range-of-motion exercises (often with Indian flute music in the background), followed by endurance activities and isometrics to increase strength. We use thera-bands, exercise balls, scarves and other modalities...I try to add variety to keep things interesting and lively. My background as a teacher has given me a great deal of experience in motivation, which comes in handy.

We practice breathing and vocalization. I often separate the class into partners or groups of three and encourage them to put some creativity into their movements, so they take ownership of the exercise and feel good about what they are doing. We close each session with relaxation techniques. I either use tapes or read a narrative to increase their awareness of visualization and imagery as relaxation techniques.

Students leave the program more energized, with greater endurance and confidence. They learn that regular activity improves their overall fitness and helps to maintain a healthy weight. Even if students walk or play golf or participate in other forms of exercise on their own, I stress the importance of approaching fitness as we do in our class—making sure that range-of-motion, endurance and strength exercises are a part of their regular routine.



**Q: Can anyone with arthritis participate in the Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program?**

**A:** The program is designed for people with arthritis and therefore, accommodates the great majority of them. **As with any exercise regime, however, it is important to check with your physician before taking part in the program.**

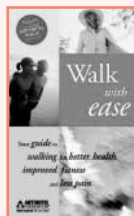
Occasionally, we'll get some participants in wheelchairs, others who wish to remain seated, or people recovering from surgery. In these cases, the movements are modified for them accordingly. Sometimes we get people who are reluctant to participate, say they would just like to watch, but are joining the rest of the class before long. I tell them to do what they can, and to respect their pain and not push themselves and do too much.

**Q: What is the best way to get information on classes in the New York area?**

**A:** If you call the **New York Arthritis Exchange™** telephone helpline, sponsored by Pfizer Inc, you will reach a trained volunteer, like me, who will provide information on courses in your area. In addition to the *Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program*, the Foundation also offers *Tai Chi for Arthritis* and the *Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program* as other group exercise options. The **Exchange** number is (212) 984.8730, or, from the 914 or 845 area codes only, (800) 246.2884.

## Walk With Ease II

The benefits of walking are no longer a secret. This book can help you develop your personal walking program that can help you lose weight, decrease stress, and have more energy. Don't wait another day to become more active and feel better!



**Take the First Step to a Healthier You!** Call the Chapter at (212) 984-8730 and order your copy (\$9.95) today.

**FREE Arthritis Foundation Self-Help, Osteoporosis and You, and Arthritis Foundation Exercise Programs for GHI Subscribers**

Pre-registration required, contact Wendy Isaacs at (212) 984-8713 for locations in our Chapter region.

## Visit Our Thrift Shop

**Arthritis Foundation Thrift Shop**  
1383 Third Avenue • New York, NY 10021  
(212) 772-8816

Donations always welcome.

## Osteoporosis Speaking Up about a "Silent" Epidemic

It is called the "silent" disease because you may have osteoporosis for years and be unaware of it until a fracture occurs. Affecting **25 million Americans** and responsible for **1.5 million fractures** a year, osteoporosis, with its resulting bone loss, is a thief that can rob you of your independence, with complications that can be life-threatening. The New York Chapter and its partners are breaking the silence with a selection of education programs designed to alert the public to the seriousness of this disease, how to prevent it, and ways to manage it.

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- **Osteoporosis: The Silent Epidemic Family Symposium** - Sponsored by **Eli Lilly & Company** and scheduled for Wednesday evening (5:00 p.m. - 8:15 p.m.), **June 6**, at the **Lighthouse International Conference Center in Manhattan**, this comprehensive program features information on diagnostic techniques, lifestyle changes that can prevent and/or manage osteoporosis, and new therapies. Participants will have ample time to pose questions to a faculty of specialists.

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- **Osteoporosis Public Forums** - Throughout the summer, **Eli Lilly & Company** will provide Chapter constituents with additional opportunities to learn about osteoporosis through a series of free public forums, including sessions in Brooklyn (Russian), the Bronx (Spanish), Queens (Chinese), and Westchester (English).

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- **Osteoporosis Professional Education Program** - With support from **Merck & Co., Inc.**, the Chapter offered an osteoporosis continuing education program for professionals as part of its "Bench to Bedside" series. Held at the Chapter office in May, this session featured a detailed review of state-of-the-art osteoporosis diagnosis and treatment.

For additional information on these osteoporosis educational opportunities, please call Ayana Woods at (212) 984-8711.

*An additional distribution of \$6,900 from estate of Lillian Zucker will support programs for people with arthritis.*

## Chapter Annual Meeting Salutes Exercise and Volunteers

"Moving in the right direction," the theme of the 2007 Annual Meeting of the New York Chapter of the Arthritis Foundation, captures the "can do" attitude of this April gathering at the Chapter office. Led by new Chapter Chair, Daniel T. McGowan, the meeting featured an overview of the accomplishments in 2006 which helped to "move the Chapter in the right direction" in the fight against arthritis. It also recognized the volunteers who made these accomplishments possible. A panel presentation added to the upbeat morning, focusing on the importance of exercise and the positive impact a regular exercise routine has for people with arthritis.

**Jodi Vandervoort**, a Chapter volunteer and mother of three from Orange County, received the Chapter's 2007 *Arthritis Walk Award* for spearheading the effort to bring the Arthritis Walk to Orange County in 2006. **Cline Davis & Mann, Inc.** captured the Chapter's 2007 *Investing in Empowerment Award* for its pro bono work in creating an inspirational brochure promoting the Chapter's major gifts expansion effort, *Investing in Empowerment/A Campaign for Arthritis Research, Education and Treatment*. And the 2007 *Corporate Leadership Award* went to **sanofi-aventis** for its two-year partnership with the Chapter on the annual Founders' Award Gala and for its role in the creation of the *sanofi-aventis/Arthritis Foundation, New York Chapter Fellowship in Orthopaedics*, now in



Accepting Chapter awards at the 2007 Annual Meeting are (left to right): **Phil Rosen** (for Cline Davis & Mann), **Ambaw Bellette** (for sanofi-aventis), and **Jodi Vandervoort**.

its third year of supporting cutting-edge orthopaedic investigations.

Hospital for Special Surgery physical therapist, **Lisa Kosman**, rounded out the morning program by leading a panel discussion on the many important benefits of exercise for people with arthritis. She was joined by volunteers **Marie Gammello** and **Theresa Sayers**, both certified Arthritis Foundation exercise instructors, and class participant, **Lorraine O'Neal**.

With the enthusiasm generated in that room the morning of the annual meeting, it was clear that the Chapter is "moving in the right direction" as we complete 2007 and look ahead to new achievements in 2008.



Chapter volunteers recognized at the 2007 Annual Meeting are (left to right): **Muriel Fisher**, **Marie Gammello**, **Maria Saba**, **Gerrie Jaffe**, and **Theresa Sayers**. With them are Chapter President **Ross Alfieri** (center) and Chapter Chairman **Dan McGowan** (right).

The estate of Dorothy Israel provided the Chapter with a distribution of \$5,000.

An additional distribution of \$100,000 from the estate of Ethel K. Denny will support arthritis research.

## Dates to Remember

**Metro SportsMed Physical Therapy**  
4911 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Brooklyn, NY  
**June 7** Osteoarthritis Prevention/Treatment  
Noon - 1 PM

**Davidson Senior Center**  
950 Union Avenue, Bronx, NY  
**June 11** Today's Treatments for Arthritis  
11 AM - Noon

**Metro SportsMed Physical Therapy**  
380 Second Avenue, New York, NY  
**July 18** Cervical Arthritis  
12:30 PM - 1:30 PM  
**August 14** Knee Pain & Arthritis  
Noon - 1 PM

Programs require pre-registration. For further information, call the **New York Arthritis Exchange™** at (212) 984-8730 or, from the 914 and 845 area codes only, 800-246-2884.

## THE 6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL

Kids get  
Arthritis, Too  
Family Day

**Saturday, June 16, 2007**  
**9 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

**Burke Rehabilitation Hospital**  
**White Plains, NY**

Join the Chapter and sponsors **Wyeth** and **The Louis R. Cappelli Foundation, Inc.** for a fun-filled day of indoor and outdoor activities and informative, interactive sessions for parents, teens and children. (Breakfast and lunch are included.)

For more information, call the Chapter at (212) 984-8730.

## Visit these Features on our Web site

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- Your Direct Access
- Kids Get Arthritis, Too
- Food for Thought
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**In the Next Issue:  
Research Update**