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YOGA HELPFUL FOR PEOPLE WITH RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS

SAN FRANCISCO, Oct. 25, 2008 – A program of yoga poses, breathing and relaxation significantly reduces joint tenderness and swelling for people with rheumatoid arthritis (RA), according to research funded in part by the Arthritis Foundation and presented this week at the American College of Rheumatology Annual Scientific Meeting in San Francisco.

Scientists from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore randomly divided a group of 30 sedentary adults with RA into two groups: one group participated in an eight-week program of yoga and the other was put on a waiting list and served as the control. Those in the yoga group took two one-hour classes per week and were instructed to practice at home as well. Traditional yoga poses were modified as needed to accommodate for limitations due to RA. Also included in the sessions were deep breathing, relaxation and meditation techniques.

The research team found that those who participated in eight weeks of yoga classes had significantly fewer tender and swollen joints than they did before starting class. Those in the waitlist control group saw no significant changes in their tender and swollen joint counts.

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Arthritis Foundation grant recipient Steffany Haaz, MFA, says, “We have previously reported that yoga helps people to feel better, and we wanted to make sure it wasn't harmful to arthritic joints. So, we were glad to find that there actually seems to be improvement in joint symptoms for RA patients. The next big question is figuring out how and why yoga might be having this effect, since it is such a multi-faceted activity.”

About the Arthritis Foundation

The Arthritis Foundation is the leading health organization addressing the needs of some 46 million Americans living with arthritis, the nation’s most common cause of disability. Founded in 1948, with headquarters in Atlanta, the Arthritis Foundation has multiple service points located throughout the country.

The Arthritis Foundation is the largest private, not-for-profit contributor to arthritis research in the world, funding more than \$400 million in research grants since 1948. Celebrating its 60th anniversary this year, the foundation helps individuals take control of arthritis by providing public health education; pursuing public policy and legislation; and conducting evidence-based programs to improve the quality of life for those living with arthritis. Information is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-800-283-7800 or www.arthritis.org.

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