

# Arthritis Foundation® Leader Links

## Exciting New Changes for 2009! Arthritis Foundation Aquatic and Exercise Programs



April 1, 2009, the revised Aquatic and Exercise program instructor manuals and trainer guides will be available for instructor trainings and recertifications. The revisions are based on feedback from our leaders, as well as instructor recommendations and literature review findings. You spoke, and we listened!

Two workgroups of twenty professionals made recommendations for changes and revisions. The recommended changes were also reviewed by several outside experts to ensure that the programs remained evidence-based. Here are some of the awesome new changes that you can expect to see in our programs.

### General changes include:

- New pre-training module
- More user-friendly manuals with more instructor resources (e.g. more lesson plans, tips on teaching mixed level classes)
- Newly combined manual for the formerly separate Instructor and Guideline and Procedure Manuals

### Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program changes include:

- More combination exercises
- Interactive sports-themed exercises (e.g. knockout punch, speed skating, kayaking)
- Expanded balance component
- New equipment
- Increased water temperature range for pools
- Additional certification requirements : must be able to swim 25 yards using any stroke without stopping; able to jump into deep water, surface, and either float for a minimum of 10 minutes or tread water for a minimum of 1 minute; and

able to perform the recovery position from face up and face down in shallow and deep water.

### Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program changes include:

- New exercises that incorporate resistance bands and weights to challenge class participants
- Simplified health education and relaxation sections
- Improved joint check, balance and endurance sections
- Elimination of movement activities as a separate component

Contact your chapter to receive information about Webcasts for trainers and recertification opportunities for leaders, instructors and trainers.

## Meet Shelia Rae— Tai Chi Master Trainer

Shelia Rae is a Tai Chi Master Trainer with Dr. Paul Lam and Tai Chi Productions. We've asked Shelia to answer a few questions to help us learn more about the program.

### Why does Tai Chi particularly help people who have arthritis?

*Dr Paul Lam and a team of medical experts have designed the Tai Chi for Arthritis Program specifically for people with arthritis. Tai Chi, with its slow, graceful movements is ideal for strengthening muscles and improving flexibility. Stronger muscles support joints and improved flexibility reduces stiffness and helps keep joints mobile.*

\* The Arthritis Foundation Tai Chi Program is based on the Tai Chi for Arthritis Program.

### Describe the ideal conditions for an Arthritis Foundation Tai Chi instructor training.

*Any venue with ample space for participants to move about and also has chairs for lectures are appropriate. We have had trainings at YMCAs, Churches, Senior Center Centers, Community Buildings, etc. The average class size varies from 6- 20 participants.*

\*If you are interested in becoming an Arthritis Foundation Tai Chi instructor, please contact your local chapter to identify the next training.

The Arthritis Foundation National Office is currently conducting a study on Tai Chi and people with arthritis. Results will be analyzed in 2010.

## ANSWERLinks

**Q** The Arthritis Foundation Life Improvement Series programs are evidence-based. What does this mean, and why is this important?

**A** An evidence-based program can be delivered in the same way each time it is offered. The program has supporting data that shows it works for people with arthritis. The data is from randomized controlled studies, published in scientific, peer reviewed journals.

Specific research studies are located on the **CDC web page**. We continue to strive to keep the programs updated and safe! Keep your eyes peeled for new updates available in 2009!

Some example statistics from research are:

- Reduce pain (AFEP 24%; AFAP 18%)
- Improved functional ability (AFEP 17%; AFAP 25%)
- 13% of participants have had decreased number of ER visits since starting program (AFEP)

Contact your chapter for more statistics and share them with your class!

## Practicing What You Preach— The Pam Snow Story in *Arthritis Today*

Pam Snow served for years as a passionate trainer and instructor for the AF Exercise and Self-Help programs. While teaching her classes, Pam consistently encouraged her participants to face the challenges of arthritis. Little did she know, however, that she would soon be facing those same challenges herself. In 2004, Pam was diagnosed with osteoarthritis. At first, Pam did not want to slow down, and she developed several knee injuries by pushing her limits. Pam has since learned to pace her exercise routines and is now taking her arthritis more seriously. Still, she is not letting arthritis “dictate her agenda.” She currently serves as Georgia’s Dept. of Public Health arthritis program manager, where she actively motivates herself and others with arthritis to adopt healthy and active lifestyles. Read the complete article in the March-April 2009 issue.



## A Successful Partnership!

San Antonio OASIS had a five year grant, which funded exercise programs for more than 150 seniors, that was coming to an end, along with the ability to pay certified instructors. For participants who had reaped the benefits of regular physical activity, ending the program was not an option. Several volunteers were willing to lead exercise programs, but they weren't certified.

Determined to overcome these and other barriers, volunteers found the Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program. Not only was it evidence-based, but also an affordable way to certify lay-instructors. Becoming a Systems Partner to the Texas Chapter was the answer. Equipping San Antonio OASIS with an AF-certified trainer was a cost effective way for both the organization and the chapter to increase reach and programs with little overhead.

During the past 3 years, this project has grown to 15 sites, 30 volunteer instructors and over 375 enrolled participants. It is continuing to grow and there is a toolkit under development to enable other organizations to replicate this project. A great success!

## Making Your Class Exciting – Your “Recipe” For Success

Instructors in all Arthritis Foundation programs share common goals: to motivate their students and keep classes safe, exciting and fun! We will be listing a complete “recipe” in each issue of Leader Links to suggest creative new ways of achieving these goals.

IDEA: “Name That Move”

TOOLS: Your own creativity, that of your fellow instructors, as well as your participants’ own life experiences.

HOW TO: Create your own original names for each of the exercises provided in your Instructor Manual, as well as special names for any combinations and/or patterns that you do in class.

RESOURCES: Your Instructor’s Manual provides a name for each exercise. Customize a few of them with creative ideas from your participants or your personal touch.

ADDITIONAL INFO: My AFAP class has renamed the Scissors Exercise. We call it “Hot Cross Buns!” See if you can figure out which exercises these new names represent: Skateboard, Oompah Loompah, Bringing Sexy Back and Pink Flamingo.

### Save the Date! Regional TTT in Las Vegas, NV!

Every year, millions flock to Las Vegas for fun, food, and entertainment. You too can enjoy all that the city has to offer while participating in a Train the Trainer Workshop April 25-26, 2009 in Henderson, NV. This will be the first training workshop of the year to include the new program changes. Looking forward to seeing you all there. The next TTT will be held in St. Louis, MO in October.

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