

# Arthritis Foundation® Leader Links

## Fight Arthritis Pain Now!



In February, the Arthritis Foundation in partnership with the Ad Council launched a national public awareness campaign to communicate that “Moving is the Best Medicine” when it comes to fighting osteoarthritis pain.

This long-anticipated campaign immediately follows the Centers for Disease Control and the Arthritis Foundation issuing a call to action to reduce the growing burden of osteoarthritis on our nation. The Ad Council campaign, entitled “Fight Arthritis Pain,” has rolled out to media markets all over the country over the past several weeks and is gaining momentum in the battle against osteoarthritis.

This campaign enables the Arthritis Foundation and its partners to create awareness on two fronts – nationally and locally. But to work locally, we need your help! What better way to encourage people suffering from arthritis pain to exercise than for the call to come from local instructors and participants of the Life Improvement Series? On a local level, your expertise and experiences are the best witnesses to the fact that exercise can make major headway in maintaining and fighting daily arthritis pain.

There are several ways your class can assist us in creating public awareness of this movement to “Fight Arthritis Pain.” One way is to offer your voice, either as a class or individually as a local spokesperson for the Arthritis Foundation. By taking on this role, you will become a real-life example to all local media that exercise is a crucial part in the fight against arthritis. Another idea would be to encourage your class participants to become their own advocates both within the community and to their local and state governments to ensure that this public call to action does not go unheard!

For more information about the campaign, call your local Arthritis Foundation office or visit [www.fightarthritispain.org](http://www.fightarthritispain.org).

## Save the date!

TTT in Cleveland, OH July 17th and 18th

The next Train the Trainer workshop will be in Cleveland, Ohio July 17th and 18th. Bring your families and make a weekend of it – the hotel is within easy driving distance of the zoo, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Great Lakes Science Center, and all the museums in University Circle. Or come early and stay late– there are several Lake Erie beaches that are within a half hour drive. Become an Arthritis Foundation Trainer and enjoy all that Cleveland has to offer! Contact your chapter for more details and save the dates!

## Arthritis Foundation Walk with Ease Program Take Control, One Step at a Time

Walk With Ease is designed to help people living with arthritis better manage their pain. It's also ideal for people without arthritis who want to make walking a regular habit. Based on research and tested programs in exercise science, behavior change and arthritis management, Walk With Ease is shown to:

- Reduce the pain and discomfort of arthritis
- Increase balance, strength and walking pace
- Build your confidence to be physically active
- Improve overall health

Participants have the option of using the Walk with Ease workbook on their own. Participants can also join a Walk with Ease group led by a trained leader (contact your chapter for more information). Walk with Ease groups meet for six weeks, three times per week. Each session lasts about an hour and is designed to be fun. The leader begins with a brief discussion of a topic important to successful walking or arthritis management. After the discussion, the group shares walking time, with everyone walking at their own pace.

To learn more about the benefits of walking and the Walk With Ease program, visit [www.LetsMoveTogether.org](http://www.LetsMoveTogether.org).

**ANSWERLinks**

**Q** Why include a swim skills assessment for leaders and instructors in the Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program?

**A** Exercising in water is fantastic! Individuals exercising in water feel lighter, move easier and feel less weight on their joints. But water activities can be dangerous. Whether you are in a class or participating in recreational activities, an aquatic emergency can happen to anyone in, on or around water. It is essential that leaders and instructors have adequate skills to ensure their safety as well as their participants. To ensure that leaders and instructors are confident and can assist themselves should an aquatic emergency occur in the water, the swim skills test (tread water for 1 minute and swim 25 yards) was implemented.

## Osteoarthritis: News You Can Use

Osteoarthritis (OA), the most common form of arthritis. Of the 46 million people affected by arthritis, nearly 27 million live with OA, a painful and potentially life-altering joint disease affecting mainly the hands, knees and hips.

Symptoms of OA typically first begin after age 40 and effect a large working population. OA can develop within 10 years of a major joint injury. Thus a teenager injured at age 15 could have OA as early as age 25 or 30. Osteoarthritis can cause activity limitation, interfere with work productivity and result in joint replacement. Also, OA generates inordinate socioeconomic costs. The average direct cost of OA is approximately \$2,600 per year per person living with OA. (>\$70B for US)

The question arises, what can be done to take control of this disease and minimize the disease affect? Based on the National Public Health Agenda for Osteoarthritis some recommendations include:

Self-Management Education – develop an understanding of the disease

Physical Activity Programs – participation in physical activity programs (i.e. Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program; Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program) can keep joints flexible, maintain or improve muscle strength and assists with weight reduction.

Maintain a Healthy Weight - For every 1 pound of weight lost, there is a 4 pound reduction in the load exerted on the knee for each step taken during daily activities.

For more information go to:  
<http://www.arthritis.org/osteoarthritis-agenda.php>

## Don't Resist Resistance

With the 2009 updates, equipment is now an optional part of the Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program. We now have a wonderful section on working with resistance equipment found on pages 51-53 of the aquatic instructor's manual.

In the aquatic program 2 types of equipment have been added: supportive and resistance. Supportive equipment includes flotation vest, kickboard and noodle. Resistance equipment includes gloves, upper body trainer, and paddles.

For the exercise program, remember using weights and therabands, participants should begin with 3-4 repetitions and build up to 8-10 reps. Your first concern is protecting the joints. Do not increase weight and reps until you are sure that your participants will not strain.

Many participants state how much the resistance work has increased their daily living capabilities – getting in and out of tubs, walking up and down stairs, being able to carry the ironing board again, among other success stories. Do not be afraid to use approved equipment in your classes. Adding this component to your class will add variety and improve your participant's quality of living.

Note: You must be updated in the new program in order to use the equipment.

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

No matter what you teach, every instructor has a common goal-- motivating their students while keeping class exciting! In each issue, we are going to list a complete “recipe”: providing the ideas and tools that could be helpful for your class.

**IDEA:** “Inquiring Participants Want To Know”  
Knowledge is Power!

**TOOLS:** Instructors Manual, Pens or Computer, Printer,  
Laminating Film

**HOW TO:** Encourage participants to suggest topics of interest, and **ONLY** use information from the Instructor Manual for the content of the posters. Prepare Health Education Posters and laminate to protect them from “wear and tear” and water. You can put main points on front and your personal notes on the back. An idea is get a portable hanging file and hang the posters in your car so they are **ALWAYS** be within arm's reach.

**RESOURCES:** **ONLY** Your AFAP or AFEP Instructors Manual and the Arthritis Foundation

**ADDL. INFO:** Consider using color to make your Health Education Poster more interesting- color poster board/card stock, pens, or color ink when using a computer. In addition your local chapter can provide LIS artwork/ photos approved by the AF. Please let us know how you are keeping your classes exciting!

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