

Arthritis Foundation® Leader Links

May is Arthritis Month – Know the Facts!

National Arthritis Awareness Month was established by presidential proclamation in 1972. Its goal is to increase awareness about the prevention and control of arthritis. Here are some facts about the prevalence of arthritis to share with your participants:

- Arthritis is the nation's leading cause of disability.
- An estimated 50 million U.S. adults – 1 in every 5 – report being told by a doctor that they have some form of arthritis such as osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, gout, lupus or fibromyalgia.
- Arthritis hits our economy with a hefty \$128 billion price tag.
- By 2030, the number of adults with arthritis will soar to 67 million

Visit arthritis.org to learn more about arthritis in the United States.

Host a Virtual Walk

Can't make it to an Arthritis Walk this year? Host a Virtual Arthritis Walk in your community or facility!

Create a team and register online by visiting <http://lmt.arthritis.org/arthritis-walk/build-a-team.php>. Find a good location near you and schedule a day for your team to complete your Virtual Arthritis Walk. You can make your walk any distance you choose – 5K, one mile or just a few times around your facility. You could even stay in the water a few extra minutes during an AFAP class. Any activity can count!

Raise funds for the Arthritis Foundation at your own convenience and pace. Compete against other facilities in your area to see who can raise the most! For additional fundraising tips and ideas visit our online Volunteer Resource Center by [clicking here](#). Contact Carrie Strike, Great West Region – cstrike@arthritis.org – with any questions about hosting your own virtual walk.



Let's Move Together

The Arthritis Walk is the Arthritis Foundation's nationwide signature event to build public awareness and raise funds to fight arthritis – the nation's leading cause of disability.

When you join your local Arthritis Walk, you become part of Let's Move Together, a nationwide

movement led by the Arthritis Foundation that encourages people to move every day to prevent or treat arthritis. Let's Move Together promotes the overall good health and empowerment that everyday movement can bring about. The funds you raise will support critical Arthritis Foundation research and discoveries, public health initiatives and public policy efforts to improve the lives of people with arthritis.

Find your local Arthritis Walk by visiting www.letsmoveTogether.org or calling 877-232-2898.

Get Out and Walk!

Walk With Ease (WWE) is the Arthritis Foundation's newest Life Improvement Series Program and a great way to get involved in your local Arthritis Walk. Designed to help people with arthritis manage their pain, this program is also ideal for those without arthritis who want to make walking part of their daily life.

The structured six-week program consists of health education information, stretching and strengthening exercises plus walking in each session. Benefits include building confidence that will help participants become physically active. One great aspect of this program is that classes can be held outdoors, making it a great way to get out and enjoy the spring weather.

Your local Arthritis Walk is right around the corner, so start a team for your class, family and friends to join! Make completing the Arthritis Walk one of your goals.

Need ideas to get motivated for the Arthritis Walk?

- Start a Walk With Ease class in your area
- Organize a dog walking group in your neighborhood
- Find out more about WWE at www.arthritis.org/WWE



Warm Weather Tips

Warm weather will be upon us soon, bringing with it special concerns about exercising outdoors. Here are some key tips to protect you and your class participants:

- Prehydrate – drink at least 8 ounces of water BEFORE you exercise.
- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, wicking clothing. Avoid dark colors – they absorb the heat.
- Exercise during the coolest time of day – early morning or evening.
- Hydrate every 15 to 30 minutes, depending on intensity of workout.
- Slow down.
- Keep electrolytes balanced with a sports drink.
- Wear a hat with a visor and ventilation holes.
- Wear sunscreen.
- To help prevent swelling in hands, stretch fingers occasionally, do arm circles periodically, don't clench fists.
- If you have a cell phone – bring it!
- Always carry your ID with you.

Finding Your Balance

Why is balance important for people with arthritis? Many people whose knees and hips are affected by arthritis experience falls that can result in devastating injuries. Compromised biomechanics (joint alignment and structure) and joint receptors too damaged by inflammation to properly transmit muscle and tendon position to the brain can both affect joint integrity.



Balance can be defined as a person's ability to maintain the body's position (center of gravity) over its base of support while moving (dynamic balance) or in a stationary position (static balance). Three systems of the body must be challenged in order to improve balance. The visual system provides information about the environment (perform exercises with the eyes open or closed). The vestibular system (inner ear) alerts us to the movement of the head (rotate or tilt the head with certain exercises). The somatosensory system tells us where we are in space (change the position of the body during exercise).

The Arthritis Foundation Exercise and Aquatic Programs have specific activities devoted to challenging balance. The Arthritis Foundation Tai Chi Program is also an effective way to improve balance.

Keep your participants safe by removing clutter on the floor and making sure there's a sturdy support nearby. It's best to include balance training before the muscles are fatigued – after your warm-up, but before strength training. Help your participants "stay in balance!"

ANSWERLinks

Q When can I use a noodle?

A It's important to remember that the Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program is an evidence-based program, meaning there's research to back up its exercises, equipment and policies. Instructors need to make sure they understand and comply with the new noodle policy that was implemented with the 2009 program revision. Several participants and instructors have voiced concern over the new rule that prohibits using noodles in the Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program as anything other than a tool for balance and stability. Here's some information to help you explain the change to your class:



Equipment can be used as a supportive and/or resistive device. Any equipment utilized in the program must be manufactured and intended for aquatic use and be approved by the program guidelines. All equipment should be used with consideration of participant's ability to swim, limitations, disease process and skin integrity. Research showed noodles provide no flotation effect and can put individuals in a compromised position, which can pose a number of injury and safety risks for your participants. Noodles, noodle bars and kickboards may be used in shallow water for balance or stability for walking, standing or during the stretch component only. They cannot be used for flotation.

National Office News

- 2011 Research Update on arthritis.org Now Available
- 2011 Drug Guide on arthritis.org Now Available
- Don't forget to subscribe to Arthritis Today magazine. Go to arthritis.org
- Like Us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/arthritis.org! Join our growing community and get the latest news and updates from the Arthritis Foundation's National Office.
- Train the Trainer Workshop – July 23rd and 24th in Cleveland, OH.

Information included in all of the publications can be shared with your participants during class!

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