

Keep moving



**VERSUS
ARTHRITIS**

WE ARE VERSUS ARTHRITIS

We're the 10 million people living with arthritis. We're the carers, researchers, health professionals, friends and parents all united in our ambition to ensure that one day, no one will have to live with the pain, fatigue and isolation that arthritis causes.

We understand that every day is different. We know that what works for one person may not help someone else. Our information is a collaboration of experiences, research and facts. We aim to give you everything you need to know about your condition, the treatments available and the many options you can try, so you can make the best and most informed choices for your lifestyle.

We're always happy to hear from you whether it's with feedback on our information, to share your story, or just to find out more about the work of Versus Arthritis. Contact us at content@versusarthritis.org

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NAFISA'S STORY

I was at my best when I turned 50. I'd decided I was going to celebrate my own golden jubilee by doing all the things I wanted to do. I'd spent years taking care of people. My son and daughter were grown up and doing really well.

I'd worked as a teaching assistant, then a court officer and, at 47, I joined Greater Manchester Police as a community support officer – I loved my job. I wanted to be a yoga instructor – that was my big plan. So, I took myself off to a mountain retreat in Spain. I used to be able to stretch my body in every direction.

Then everything changed. First, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I asked, 'am I going to die?'. When the consultant said no, I thought 'let's get on with it'.

I'd just got over my cancer and I thought finally everything was going to be OK. Then, I was sitting on the sofa one day and suddenly I just couldn't move.

I was in so much pain. I never knew rheumatoid arthritis felt like that. I've never been in that amount of pain. In the end, I spent a year and a half in a wheelchair. I never wanted my son to have to push me around. It was horrible.

I couldn't manage. I loved my job but eventually I had to be medically retired.

I was always told to try to keep moving but it's difficult when you're in so much pain. Sometimes it's hard to remember it's not movement that's attacking your joints, it's rheumatoid arthritis and your immune system.

Then, about six months ago something changed. I got a new medication that worked. It was the fifth one I'd tried. I had two doses and it kicked in – I started feeling just that little bit better. It was just small, but I realised I could move my hand.

That was the chance I needed. I started small – slow, gentle movements, just moving my hands and my wrists, then my arms. I'd sit in front of the TV and move my feet and ankles, just gently. They were the type of tiny movements other people don't think much of, but the more I did it the easier it became, and the better I felt.

At first, I'd do 10 minutes of movement in a chair every day - most standing exercises can be done in a chair. I'd say to myself 'Get up Nafisa. Before this who were you? You can do this – get up'.

I'd try to walk every day using my frame. It took a good four months until I felt strong enough to stop using it – now I make sure I walk for 45 minutes every day. It hasn't happened overnight, but now I don't use my frame at all.

I can now touch my knee to my nose. I have such a sense of achievement just by doing that. My next goal is to get my head down to the floor – I'm going to do it.

After two years living with this illness, I feel ready to tell people how I feel. I know we're all different, but sometimes when you hear someone else's story you realise you have something in common and it gives you the confidence you need to just make a small change.

When you're in pain getting up off a chair is massive, I understand that. I can now get off the sofa, and move my body, and walk around. I've got my independence back – I can be Nafisa again.

Why is exercise important for people with arthritis?

It can be hard to keep moving when you have arthritis but staying as active as possible can reduce your pain and the symptoms of your condition, and help you to stay independent.

As well as reducing your pain, exercise can:

- improve your muscle strength which keeps your joints strong and well-supported
- reduce stiffness in your joints
- help your balance
- improve energy levels and feelings of tiredness
- help you manage your weight
- boost your mood.

The good things that being more active can do for you

The infographic consists of six icons arranged in two rows of three. Each icon is accompanied by a text label below it. The icons are: 1. A green hand holding a purple dumbbell. 2. A green stick figure with a purple starburst behind its back. 3. A purple stick figure walking a green dog on a yellow leash. 4. A purple stick figure sitting at a green desk with a yellow chair. 5. A purple speedometer with a green needle. 6. A purple heart outline containing green lungs.

- improve muscle strength
- reduce pain and stiffness
- improve energy levels & mood
- stay independent
- manage weight
- improve heart and lung health

Rest or exercise?

Many people with arthritis are worried that exercise could cause further damage to their joints, but exercise is good for us and helps our joints stay healthy.

Your body is designed to move and resting too much could actually cause harm to your joints and the tissues around them. You might notice after being unwell for a short time that you feel much weaker or less fit than usual. It might feel like things you used to do easily before are harder.

So it's important to stay as active as you can to reduce the risk of your muscles or other tissues around your joints becoming weaker, as this could cause more problems with your joints in the future. Many people notice the benefits very quickly once they start moving again, and feel like they have more energy or feel more confident.

Improving your health

For some types of arthritis, people may be at a higher risk of developing other conditions that affect the heart and lungs, so it's important to do some general fitness exercises, also known as aerobic exercises, which help to improve your heart and lung health.

You can find out more about fitness exercises later in this booklet.

Exercise can also help you maintain a healthy weight, especially when combined with a balanced diet. Keeping to a healthy weight puts less strain on your joints, which can also reduce pain.

Some types of arthritis or the drugs to treat them can cause problems with your bones, leading to conditions like osteoporosis. But doing activity that puts weight through our bones helps to keep them strong, and balance exercises reduce the risk of falling, which in turn reduces the risk of breaking bones easily.

Boosting your mood

Another important benefit of physical activity is the way it can improve how you feel.

Many people with arthritis and related conditions can experience low mood or problems with their sleep, but physical activity can actually improve your energy levels and reduce fatigue, help you sleep better and boost your confidence and mood.

Being active is also a great way to socialise – either by doing activities with friends and family, or meeting people through exercise groups. This can also help boost your mood, and over time you'll have more energy to do more of the things you love.

How much exercise should I do?

It's recommended that all adults in the UK are active every day, even if they don't have a health condition. Research shows that exercise is one of the best things you can do to improve the symptoms of arthritis and related conditions.

Keeping active

Each week, adults should aim to do at least 150 minutes of physical activity that makes them slightly short of breath – for example, you should be able to talk but not sing a song. This is known as moderate intensity activity and includes things such as brisk walking, cycling or swimming. There are lots of things that fit into this category, and it's important to find the right activity for you.

This doesn't mean you have to do it all in one go, and lots of people break this down into five 30-minute sessions a week or do more even shorter sessions. Even doing a little will help, so just do as much as you feel you can.

If you're doing more vigorous activity, such as running, playing a sport such as tennis, or climbing stairs, you only need to do 75 minutes each week. Vigorous intensity activity is something that you can't really speak while doing and makes you very short of breath.

Remember, a lot of things you do in your daily life probably count towards this total, such as:

- walking to the shops
- gardening
- walking upstairs
- doing the housework.



Moving more

It's also important to break up any periods of time we spend being sedentary – such as by sitting or not moving much – with some light activity.

Modern life has meant that many people are more sedentary now than they used to be, and many people spend more than seven hours sitting or lying down each day, which can be bad for our health. Some examples of sedentary behaviour include sitting down at a computer screen, watching television, or using a car for short journeys.

Think about times when you are sedentary for long periods and see if there are things you could do to reduce this – for example, walking short journeys instead of driving, standing to take a phone call, using a desk that allows you to sit or stand or setting reminders to stand and stretch during the day.

Building strength

Adults should also do activities that help build or maintain muscle strength on two days a week. If you're not able to do this, just do as much as you can.

It's a good idea to focus on the major muscles in the body – the legs, hips, back, tummy, chest, shoulders and arms.

But you don't need weights or a gym membership to work on your strength – yoga, doing the gardening, carrying shopping bags and doing some types of housework all help improve your strength.

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Improve balance

It's also important to do exercises that help improve your balance on two days a week – and this is particularly important for people over 65. Dancing, tai chi, and balance exercises are good examples.

It's important to work on balance as this reduces the risk of falls.

The government website has information on the different physical activity guidelines for other groups, including children and pregnant women. Find more information at www.gov.uk/government/collections/physical-activity-guidelines



How will I know if I have overdone it?

Sometimes when we start a new activity or exercise, we can push ourselves too much. It's important to start off gently and build up our activity levels over time.

It's normal to feel mild discomfort whilst exercising and some soreness or in your muscles after exercise, especially if you're just getting started. But if you find you have significantly more or severe pain while you're exercising or after you've exercised, you should stop and talk to a healthcare professional about it.

If you do feel like you have overdone it after exercising, or if you have any joints that are hot and swollen, you could try using an ice pack or a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a damp tea towel, or something similar, to help. Put this on the affected joint for around 15-20 minutes at a time.

If you have pain – without any warmth or swelling – after you have exercised, you could use a heat pack or ice pack on the affected joint. Some people find using a mixture of both alternately can help. Even when using a heat pack, it's still a good idea to cover the skin with a towel, and don't use the pack for more than 20 minutes at a time.

If you feel better the next day, start again but slowly and gently increase the amount you do. But if you find your pain is lasting longer than a short time after exercise, or if you have any sudden onset of pain during exercise, then you may have an injury.

If the symptoms of pain, heat and swelling continue for more than a few days you should contact your GP or healthcare team.

Many exercise-related injuries can be treated at home but if things don't improve over time, you may need to visit a GP, minor injuries unit or NHS walk-in centre, where they will be able to give you treatment and advice.

Remember that exercise injuries are easily avoided by warming up and cooling down properly, using safe equipment, wearing the right clothing and footwear, and using the right techniques.

Getting started with exercise

Do I need to see a doctor or physiotherapist?

You don't always need to see a healthcare professional to get started with exercise, as long as you take things slowly and listen to your body. If you have any concerns or worries, a healthcare professional, personal trainer or fitness instructor may be able to help.

If you're worried about starting a new activity plan, you might want to speak to a healthcare professional, such as a doctor or physiotherapist, first. They may even be able to give you some advice or specific exercises to try.

For some conditions, you might be referred to a physiotherapist. They can help you put together a specific exercise plan to help you manage and reduce your symptoms. They'll also be able to help you improve your general fitness through regular exercise.

You can also find out more about specific exercise advice for your condition on the Versus Arthritis website www.versusarthritis.org/about-arthritis/



What do I need to get started?

You don't always need special equipment to exercise, and a lot of things can be done around your home, using apps, YouTube videos, DVDs, and your own furniture.

It's important to be comfortable when you're active, and this includes having the right clothing and footwear. This doesn't mean you need to spend money on specialist fitness wear, but wearing loose fitting clothes while you exercise will help you move. Try not to choose anything too baggy, as you don't want to wear anything that might get in the way.

It's a good idea to have some well-fitting, comfortable footwear too. This may be trainers which offer support and help absorb any shocks and protect your joints, especially if you're doing quite strenuous exercise.

Keeping hydrated helps our bodies keep cool, so it's important to make sure you drink plenty of water before, during and after exercise to reduce the risk of dehydration.



Warming up and cooling down

It's important to warm up before you exercise, as this helps your body prepare for exercise and reduces the risk of injury. A warm-up should increase your heart rate and body temperature, which helps your muscles get ready for exercise.

A warm-up should include some of the movements or activity you're about to do. For example, you could walk, cycle, jog or swim gently and gradually increase the effort you put in until you're a bit out of breath.

After you've exercised you can repeat some of the movements you did in your warm-up to help cool your body down. This will help reduce stiff joints or muscles after exercise.

How do I stay motivated?

It can be difficult to stay motivated once you start being active but there are a few things you can do to help you keep moving:

- Do an activity that you enjoy.
- Set realistic goals – and remember that it's normal for these to change as your condition changes.
- Do it regularly so it becomes a habit.
- Try being active with a family member or friend.
- Remember to reward yourself when you reach your goals.

It's important to start off slowly and gradually build up, as if you start too fast you might find the activity painful and be put off.

To build up your activity, try to gradually increase the following:

- frequency - how often you do it
- duration - the length of time you spend exercising
- intensity - how hard you try.

Setting your activity goals

Some people find it helpful to set themselves goals when you start physical activity. This can be a good way to measure how much you've achieved since you started.

When setting goals, it's important to remember not to be too hard on yourself – your condition can be changeable, but don't let this make you feel defeated or disappointed. Even doing a small amount of movement on bad days can make such a difference and is still something to be proud of.

You should also remember that it's normal for your goals to change as your condition changes.

Try to make a record of how you feel after doing some activity and learn how certain movements make your body feel. You can also tell your friends and family about your goals, so they can help you stay on track.

Some people use the word **SMART** to help them set their goals.

This stands for:

- **S**pecific: What do you want to achieve? Why is it important to you? When, where and who with?
- **M**asurable: How will you know when you have reached your goal? Some people use fitness watches, apps or written trackers to keep a record.
- **A**ttainable: Is your goal realistic, based on time, money, your condition?
- **R**elevant: Is this a good time for you to set this goal? Think about your current health, other people you want to support you in this goal.
- **T**ime-bound: When do you want to reach your goal by?

For example: My goal is to feel less pain when walking. I plan to go on two short walks with my friend Cathy each week, gradually increasing the time we spend walking, so that in one month's time I can walk for 15 minutes without stopping.



What do you already do?

You might be surprised by how much physical activity you already do. Even being on your feet while making a cup of tea counts as being active. Household tasks, like going shopping, mowing the lawn or making the bed, count towards your activity total.

Have a think about things you do already and see if you can find ways you could build more activity into your daily life, and make a note of what you could do. For example, could you march on the spot while you wait for the kettle to boil, get off the bus one stop early, or do some stretches during adverts while watching TV?

What would you like to achieve?

When setting your goals, it's important to think about what moving more will mean to you. It may help reduce your pain or give your more energy – but you should also think about how it will affect you

in your daily life. If your pain is reduced, you may be able to meet up with friends. And having more energy could mean you're able to play with your children or grandchildren.

Make a note of what you want physical activity to help you with – this could be something like having the energy and confidence to go to an event, being able to reach to put on your socks, having less pain so you can walk to the shops, or simply feeling stronger and healthier.

What stops you from being active?

Sometimes it can be time, energy, money, or many other things that stops us from being active. Think about what gets in the way of you being more active and see if there is anything that you could do to make this easier.

If pain and stiffness in the morning stops you, try exercising in the afternoon. If you're worried about spending money at an expensive gym, why not try some of our home-based exercises, or take a look at the programmes and apps at the back of this booklet.

Keeping track

Keeping a record of your exercise and activity can be helpful for getting started and might help you stay motivated to keep moving on difficult days.

You can use the tracker overleaf to keep a record of your goals and what activity you've done.

Don't forget to reward yourself and record what you have done – no matter how small you think it seems. This reward can be anything – think about things like giving yourself some 'me time', smiling at yourself in the mirror, or treating yourself to something new for your home.

MY KEEP MOVING DIARY



Add notes about your movement and how you felt afterwards

What I did

How I felt

Monday

Tuesday

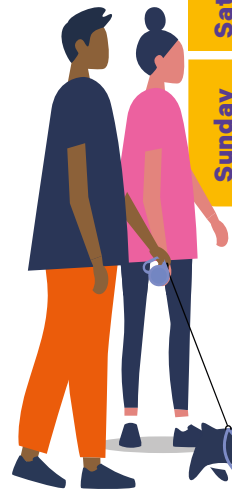
Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday



GOALS

What & when?

With who?

On a difficult day, I'll...

REWARD

I'll reward myself by...

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www.versusarthritis.org/exercise

What type of exercise should I do?

It's important to do a mixture of exercises, including:

- stretching exercises
- strengthening exercises
- fitness exercises
- balance exercises.

Stretching exercises

Stretching exercises are sometimes known as range-of-movement or flexibility exercises. These involve bending and straightening your joints as much as is comfortable to keep them flexible and reduce the risk of any loss of mobility.

It's easy to avoid bending and straightening your joints through their full range of movement during the day, particularly when you have pain. But not moving our joints fully can cause them to become more stiff and painful over time. They can be done as a warm-up before starting other exercises too.



A physiotherapist might be able to give you some specific stretching exercises. Other examples include yoga and tai chi. There are also some stretching exercises included on the poster that comes with this booklet.

When doing stretching exercises, you should try to move your joints as far as you comfortably can, until you feel a stretch in the muscles around the joint. Try to keep the movement slow and controlled.

Strengthening exercises

Strengthening exercises help to keep the muscles around your joint strong and secure. Having strong muscles helps keep joints stable and can reduce pain in the joints and the tissues around them.

Changes to our muscles can happen very quickly – you might notice that you feel weaker or wobbly even after a few days of rest if you've been unwell with a cold or flu.

To strengthen your muscles, you simply need to move against some form of resistance. Even things like standing up from a chair will mean you're strengthening your leg muscles because you're working against gravity.

Other examples include Pilates and tai chi. There are also some strengthening exercises included on the poster that comes with this booklet.

Start strengthening exercises slowly and build up how much you do gently. Start with a low number of repetitions of different strengthening exercises and add to this over time. Your muscles should feel tired and like they have done some work after the exercises.

You should aim to do some strengthening exercises on at least two days a week.

If your joints are hot or swollen because of your condition, it's sometimes a good idea to focus on stretching exercises and avoid strengthening exercises until they settle down.

Fitness exercises

Fitness exercises are important for everyone to stay healthy. They're sometimes known as aerobic exercises. This kind of exercise includes things such as cycling, swimming, and doing exercise classes.

Doing fitness or aerobic exercises can help to improve the strength, balance and range of movement of your joints, the health of your heart and lungs, and improve your independence.

Any exercise that gets you breathing more quickly, or your heart beating faster helps to improve the way your heart and lungs work. Over time, your energy levels, mood and sleep can also improve.

Balance exercises

It's important to do exercises to improve your balance on two days a week, particularly as we get older. This will help reduce the risk of falls, which in turn reduces the risks of frailty and falls, which can have more complications as we age.

There are specific balance exercises that can help, but things like playing bowls, doing tai chi or dancing – either at classes or around your home – improve balance too. If practising your balance at home, make sure the area around you is clear of anything that could trip you up.

Different types of activity

There are many different types of activity you can try, that will help to improve or maintain your general health and fitness. Try not to let the fact that there may not be other people with arthritis doing these exercises, as many of these activities can be easily adapted to suit you.

If you're working with a personal trainer or fitness instructor, it's a good idea to tell them about your condition and any concerns you have before you start. They should be able to suggest changes to help you exercise safely and get the most benefit from an activity.

You can find more information on resources and groups for these activities on page 29 of this booklet.



Swimming and water-based exercises

Swimming works the whole body but doesn't involve putting less weight through your joints – so it's a great way to work your muscles without putting strain on your joints if they're painful.

Most pools cater for people with different needs and abilities, so if you're new to swimming or are concerned about getting in and out of the pool, speak to someone at your local pool as they may be able to help.

Being active in water isn't just limited to swimming. It's possible to do some exercises for your condition, with the support of the water helping reduce pain in your joints, and even walking in the pool will work your body. There are also water-based aerobics classes, which involve doing exercises as part of a fitness class, in water around waist height.

Walking

Walking briskly, even if only for a short distance or time, can help improve your lung and heart health, as well as benefiting your bones, joints and muscles. You can also try adding in periods of speed walking or walking uphill to challenge yourself more.

Remember that any walking you do usually counts as physical activity, but you can try going on routes around your local area, such as walking around the park.

Running or jogging

Running or jogging can sometimes be challenging on your joints, but it also has great benefits for your fitness and can reduce depression and anxiety. Try doing some strengthening exercises for your legs before you start.

Cycling

Cycling is a good exercise to work your lower body and is low impact so shouldn't cause more pain to your joints. It also gets you breathing quicker and your heart beating faster, so is good for your heart and lungs.

To increase the intensity of your cycling, or to meet other people in a group class, you could try spinning. This is a low-impact fitness class done on exercise bikes. Your local gym may offer classes. You can also use an exercise bike in a gym, or get one for your home.



Fitness classes

Some people find that doing physical activity in a group can help them to stay motivated. It can help you to meet other people with a similar level of fitness to you and making friends in your class can help make exercise more enjoyable.

Fitness classes include aerobics and dance classes, but these don't always have to be high impact. Step aerobics and dance classes like Zumba can be suitable for different levels of fitness.

Yoga

Yoga includes posture and breathing exercises that can help with your general fitness and range of movement, as well as improving your mood. It's also been shown to help with back pain.

It involves slow, gentle movements which can be easier for people with joint pain, and will help improve your muscle strength and balance. It's a good idea to find an instructor who can help you adjust some movements for your condition, especially if you have had any joint replacements in the past.

Tai chi

Tai chi involves slow, controlled movements and helps with your range of movement. It's a great way for people with arthritis or joint pain to improve their muscle strength and balance too, without putting too much strain on the joints.

Pilates

Pilates focuses on balancing the body and improving your posture and can improve how you feel. The balance activities in Pilates, and tai chi above, are particularly helpful as we get older as they can reduce the risk of falls.

Doing physical activity in a group can help you stay motivated and make exercise more enjoyable.

Chair-based exercises

If you're just starting out with exercise, and you struggle with walking or have pain in your legs, it can be a good idea to start out with some gentle seated exercises.

When you're doing the exercises, make sure to:

- Choose a chair of the right height, so you can sit with your knees bent at a right angle and your feet flat on the floor.
- Avoid a chair with arms, as this could restrict your movement during the exercises.
- Choose a stable chair that doesn't have wheels.

Gym

Gyms have lots of different equipment you can use – including exercise bikes and treadmills. So, if you're worried about going outside to do these activities, you can practise cycling, walking or jogging indoors.

You'll usually have an induction with a fitness instructor or personal trainer when you join a gym. If you have any concerns, you can ask them for advice on training with your condition.



Research and new developments

The relationship between sport, exercise and osteoarthritis

Maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle can reduce the future risk of osteoarthritis developing and progressing, particularly in the lower limb joints. Certain types of exercise have also been shown to reduce the risk of injury and help people recover from injury.

Some sports can present a small risk of injury, which can increase the future risk of osteoarthritis. That's why our Centre for Sport, Exercise and Osteoarthritis Versus Arthritis is looking to better understand how exercise can reduce the risk of osteoarthritis. This work is crucial to support public health advice and clinical practice to reduce the impact of arthritis.

Research includes exploring if there's a connection between running and risk of osteoarthritis. The team are evaluating individuals who participate regularly in recreational running over time, to study the development of knee osteoarthritis.

Exercise programmes

Walk With Ease is a community-based walking programme, developed in the United States, specifically designed for people with arthritis. The programme has been shown to be effective in reducing symptoms of arthritis and improving mobility.

Our research is exploring how Walk With Ease could be implemented in the UK, and is looking at planning a trial to evaluate the benefits of the programme on physical activity and health of people with arthritis.

Researchers at the University of Oxford are also developing a programme tailored for people over 80, with hip or knee osteoarthritis. The programme will reflect the challenges people in this age group face with exercise and will aim to deliver a programme suitable for every person's ability.

Sleep, exercise and pain

Getting good quality sleep and being able to do regular physical activity are valuable goals and we know they can also have a positive impact on pain.

Research we fund at the University of Aberdeen is exploring the link between sleep, exercise and pain in those living with long-term pain. The research holds the potential to develop better resources and support, to improve sleep and levels of activity, and hopefully reduce pain.

e-rehabilitation

Evidence shows exercise can reduce pain and improve function of the knee. But exercise programmes needed to help relieve knee pain are usually delivered by physiotherapy services, which are overstretched. This means patients often encounter long waits and short sessions.

Making the most of technology may help resolve this issue. E-rehabilitation programmes may be a useful and effective way to deliver exercise programmes to patients in their own homes.

Research at the University of Leeds is exploring if exercise programmes delivered via the internet are a useful way to support people with knee pain. This would mean that people with arthritis have easier access to support and feel more encouraged in their recovery, ultimately reducing long-term knee pain.

Research shows that exercise is one of the best things you can do to improve the symptoms of arthritis and related conditions.

More information, apps and exercise programmes

The following section aims to give you an idea of some useful tools that might help you be more active. But there are lots of programmes, apps and sources of support out there.

You can get in touch with your local council for more information on activities in local parks and leisure centres, or visit the council's website. Your healthcare professional might also be able to suggest programmes or services that could help you.

Versus Arthritis

Visit www.versusarthritis.org/exercise to find out about physical activity programmes run by Versus Arthritis, as well as more information on different types of exercise you can do for your condition, videos and animations.

Let's Move

You can also sign up to our 'Let's Move' programme to receive content to inspire you get active and hear stories from people whose lives have been transformed by movement.

'Let's Move Versus Arthritis' is a community on Facebook for people to come together and share support, hints and tips for being active. Find out more or join the group at: www.facebook.com/groups/letsmovewithversusarthritis or search for 'Let's Move Versus Arthritis' on Facebook.

In Your Area

The 'In Your Area' section on the Versus Arthritis website has information on local services, including physical activity programmes, that you can join. Find out more at: www.versusarthritis.org/in-your-area/

10 Today

10 Today provides short routines to get you moving more, and is available online and on the radio. Find out more about the programme, watch the routines or find your local radio station at:

<https://10today.co.uk/>

Active 10

This NHS app records your walking activity, helps you set goals and gives you tips to boost your activity. Find out more at:

www.nhs.uk/better-health/get-active/

British Wheel of Yoga

The British Wheel of Yoga website has information to help you find yoga classes near you, as well as related events. Find out more at:

www.bwy.org.uk/

Chair-based exercises

The NHS has some chair-based exercises on its website. Find out more here: www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/sitting-exercises/

Couch to 5K

This is a running programme for beginners, developed by the NHS. The app helps coach you through your running activity, works with your music player and tracks your runs. Find out more at:

www.nhs.uk/better-health/get-active/

Cycling UK

Cycling UK has information on routes, local groups, and a journey planner, as well as information for beginners. Find out more at:

www.cyclinguk.org/

Disability Sport

There are national bodies promoting sport and activity for people with disabilities. Their websites have lots of useful information, including search functions to find inclusive gyms. Find out more below:

- Activity Alliance (England): www.activityalliance.org.uk/
- Disability Sport NI: www.dsni.co.uk/
- Disability Sport Wales: www.disabilitysportwales.com/
- Scottish Disability Sport: www.scottishdisabilitysport.com/

ESCAPE-pain

ESCAPE-pain is a programme designed to help people with knee, hip or back pain. It involves meeting with other people in a class, learning more about joint pain and doing tailored exercises. To find out more, visit: <https://escape-pain.org/>

Get Active

Get Active has lots of hints, tips and guides for getting started with different types of activity, including information on exercising with arthritis. You can also search for activities near you. Find out more at:

<https://getactive.io/>

The Great Outdoor Gym Company

The Great Outdoor Gym Company offers free fitness spaces in local parks. Find out more on their website: www.tgogc.com/

Good Boost

Good Boost uses technology to create water or land based exercise programmes for people with arthritis or related conditions. Visit

www.goodboost.ai/ to find out more, search for nearby classes or download the app.

Just Swim

Just Swim has information for people at all stages of swimming, including people who want to learn. Their website also has the Poolfinder to find more information on local pools, swimming clubs and accessibility. Find out more at: www.swimming.org/justswim/

NHS Fitness Studio

The NHS has created some exercise videos which you can access for free on their website. They cover a range of different exercises, and there are some that have been created with people with arthritis or joint pain in mind, including Pilates. Find out more at: www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/

Paths for All

Paths for All aims to increase the number of people walking for health every day in Scotland. You can find out more at: www.pathsforall.org.uk/

Ramblers

Ramblers has information on local walking groups and routes in your local area. Find out more at: www.ramblers.org.uk/

We Are Undefeatable

We Are Undefeatable is a campaign supporting people with a range of long-term conditions, including arthritis. The website has a range of inspiring stories, suggested exercises and tips to get started. Find out more at: <https://weareundefeatable.co.uk/>

Where can I find out more?

If you've found this information useful, you might be interested in other titles from our range. You can download all of our booklets from our website www.versusarthritis.org or order them by contacting our Helpline. If you wish to order by post, please see our address below.

Bulk orders

For bulk orders, please contact our warehouse, APS, directly to place an order:

Phone: 0800 515 209

Email: info@versusarthritis.org

Tell us what you think

All of our information is created with you in mind. And we want to know if we are getting it right. If you have any thoughts or suggestions on how we could improve our information, we would love to hear from you. Please send your views to

bookletfeedback@versusarthritis.org

or write to us at the following address:

**Versus Arthritis, Copeman House, St Mary's Court,
St Mary's Gate, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S41 7TD.**

Thank you!

A team of people helped us create this booklet. We would like to thank Dr Harriet Collins, Greg Bicker, Ben Jeeves, David Pilbury, Dr Janet Suckley and Justin Webb for helping us review this booklet.

We would also like to give a special thank you to the people who shared their opinions and thoughts on the booklet. Your contributions make sure the information we provide is relevant and suitable for everyone.

Talk to us

Helpline

You don't need to face arthritis alone. Our advisors aim to bring all of the information and advice about arthritis into one place to provide tailored support for you.

Helpline: 0800 5200 520

Email: helpline@versusarthritis.org

Our offices

We have offices in each country of the UK. Please get in touch to find out what services and support we offer in your area:

England

Tel: 0300 790 0400

Email: enquiries@versusarthritis.org

Scotland

Tel: 0141 954 7776

Email: scotland@versusarthritis.org

Northern Ireland

Tel: 028 9078 2940

Email: nireland@versusarthritis.org

Wales

Tel: 0800 756 3970

Email: cymru@versuarthritis.org



Exercises to keep you moving

It's important to keep moving when you have arthritis. The exercises here will help you to stretch and strengthen your joints.

Remember to drink water while you're exercising and make sure you have plenty of space around you to avoid injury.

It's a good idea to start slowly and build up gradually if you're new to exercise. Get advice and support from a healthcare professional or fitness instructor if you have any concerns about starting a new exercise plan.

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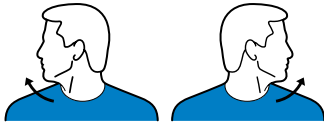
Registered Charity England and Wales No. 207771, Scotland No. SC041156
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Neck exercises

Head turn

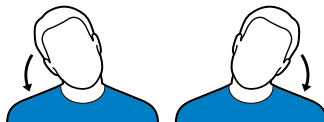
It's best to sit down for this exercise to help you balance. Turn your head towards one side, keeping your chin at the same height. Gently tense your neck muscles and hold for five seconds. Return your head to the centre and repeat on the opposite side. Repeat five times on each side.

If this is uncomfortable to do while you're standing or sitting, try it while lying down, so that your head is supported.



Head tilt

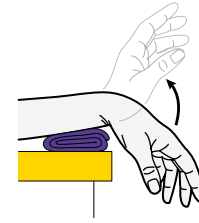
It's best to sit down for this exercise to help you balance. Tilt your head down towards your shoulder, leading with your ear. Gently tense your neck muscles and hold for five seconds. Return your head to the centre and repeat on the opposite side. Repeat five times on each side.



Hand and wrist exercises

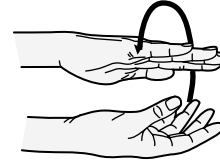
Hand lift

Place your forearm on a flat surface, like a table, with your hand hanging over the edge, palm facing down. A rolled-up towel under your wrist might provide comfort. Keeping your fingers relaxed, move your hand upward until you feel a gentle stretch, then return to the starting position.



Wrist turn

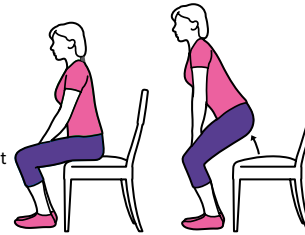
Bend your elbow to 90 degrees with your palm facing down. Rotate your forearm, so that your palm faces up and then down. You can stand or sit to do this.



Knee exercises

Sit-to-stands

Sit on a chair. Without using your hands for support, stand up and then sit back down. Make sure each movement is slow and controlled. Repeat until you can't do any more. Rest for one minute then repeat another two times. If the chair is too low, start with rising from a cushion on the seat and remove when you don't need it anymore.



Straight-leg raise

Sit back in your chair, with a straight back. Straighten and raise one of your legs. Hold for a slow count to 10, then slowly lower your leg. Repeat 10 times with each leg.

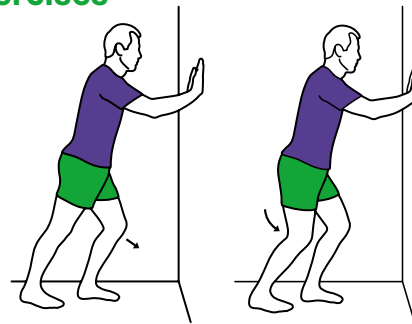


Foot and ankle exercises

Wall push

(a) Facing a wall, put both hands on the wall at shoulder height and place one foot in front of the other. The front foot should be around 30cm (12 inches) from the wall. With the front knee bent and the back knee straight, bend the front knee towards the wall, until the calf in your back leg feels tight. Relax and repeat 10 times.

(b) Repeat (a) but bring the back foot forward a little, so that the back knee is slightly bent. Repeat this 10 times.



Ankle rotation

Move your ankle around slowly in a circle. Do this 10 times one way, then repeat in the opposite direction.



Shoulder and elbow exercises

Elbow bend

Stand up straight and lower your arm to one side. Bend your arm slowly upwards so your hand is touching your shoulder. Hold for 15-30 seconds. Repeat 10 times. This exercise can also be done with a light weight.



Arm lifts

Place your hands behind your head so your elbows are pointing to the sides and pressed back as far as you can. Hold for five seconds.

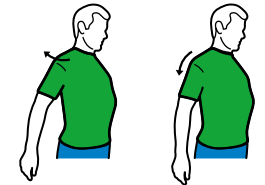


Then place your hands behind your back, again keeping your elbows pointing out and pressed back as far as you can. Hold for five seconds.

Do each movement five times.

Shoulder stretch

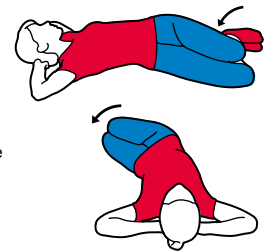
Squeeze your shoulder blades back and together and hold for five seconds. Pull your shoulder blades downward and hold for five seconds. Relax and repeat 10 times.



Back exercises

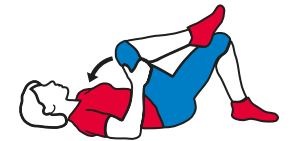
Knee rolls

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet together. Roll your knees to one side, keeping your shoulders flat on the bed or floor, and hold for 10 seconds. Roll your knees back to the starting position, and then over to the other side and repeat. Do this exercise three times on each side.



Knees to chest

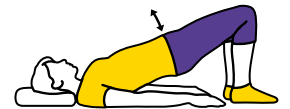
Lie on your back, with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor or bed. Bring one knee up and use your hands to pull it gently towards your chest. Hold the leg in position for five seconds, and then relax. Repeat this exercise with the other knee. Do the exercise five times on each side.



Hip exercises

Bridging

Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor or bed. Lift your pelvis and lower back off the floor. Hold the position for five seconds and then lower down slowly.



Squats

Hold onto a chair or work surface for support. Squat down until your kneecap is directly over your big toe. Your knees should not go in front of your toes. Return to your normal standing position.

Repeat until you can't do anymore, rest for one minute, then repeat another two times. As you improve, try to squat a little further, but don't bend your knees beyond a right angle.



Keep moving

If you have not been active for a while or are new to moving more, this booklet will give you some top tips and information to help you get started. It will also help you set realistic and achievable goals.

Many people find it helps to be active with a family member or friend, so you can work through this booklet with them to make getting active part of your time together.

For information please visit our website:

versusarthritis.org

0300 790 0400

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