STOP JOINT PAIN BEFORE IT STARTS.
If you have arthritis, you know all about joint pain. But did you know that you can protect your painful joints by learning safe, new ways to do the things you do every day? Yes, you can.
This guide will help you learn ways to protect your joints and perform everyday activities easier.

YOU CAN PROTECT YOUR JOINTS FOUR WAYS:
1. Check your posture
2. Use walking or assistive devices
3. Control your weight
4. Avoid activities that cause pain to your joints

1. Check your posture
It is important that you use good posture when you are standing, sitting or even lying down. Keeping your back straight and your shoulders back will help you put your body in a pose that won’t strain your joints.

2. Use assistive devices
Assistive devices can help keep stress off certain joints by helping make tasks easier.
Some assistive devices include:
• Extra thick pens that make it easier to hold and write
• Longer handles and reach extenders that give you better control
• Jar openers that help you
• Buttoning aids that help sore fingers manage small details

Your doctor also may suggest that you use a cane, crutches, or a walker to reduce stress on your hips and knees.
3. Control your weight

Weight control means staying close to your recommended weight or losing weight if you are overweight now.

**WEIGHT CONTROL HELPS:**
- Reduce your risk for getting arthritis in your knees, hip or back
- Ease pain by reducing stress on your joints

4. Manage your activities

It is helpful to learn how to do your daily activities by putting less stress on your joints. There are many ways to conserve your energy and use your joints wisely.

**TIPS FOR PROTECTING YOUR JOINTS:**
- Use larger or stronger joints to carry things.
- Use proper methods for bending, lifting, reaching, sitting and standing
- Avoid activities that hurt an affected joint.
- Avoid staying in one position for a long period of time. Move or change positions often.
- Keep your muscles strong and your joints flexible.
- Respect pain: If you have pain that lasts for two hours or more after an activity or exercise, then you’ve done too much.

**Remember:**
- Talk to your doctor
- Reduce the amount of stress on your joints
- Learn about ways to protect your joints

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<tr>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>RIGHT</th>
<th>WRONG</th>
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<tr>
<td>Carrying objects</td>
<td>Use palms of both hands</td>
<td>DO NOT use your fingers</td>
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<td>Climbing stairs</td>
<td>Go up by leading with stronger leg; go down leading with weaker leg.</td>
<td>DO NOT put pressure on your weaker leg</td>
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<td>Lifting objects</td>
<td>Hold items close to your body</td>
<td>DO NOT put pressure on your arms, hands or back</td>
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<td>Opening jar</td>
<td>Use the palm of your hand or a jar opener</td>
<td>DO NOT grasp or twist your fingers</td>
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<td>Traveling</td>
<td>Divide travel items into two equal loads or use a suitcase with wheels</td>
<td>DO NOT carry unequal loads</td>
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For more information: The Arthritis Foundation offers a wide variety of books, brochures and videos about different forms of arthritis, treatment and self-management techniques to help you take control of your arthritis. To order any of these products, become an Arthritis Foundation member or to subscribe to the Arthritis Foundation’s award-winning consumer health magazine, *Arthritis Today*, call (800) 283-7800. Call or visit our Web site (www.arthritis.org) to find out how you can take control of your arthritis and start living better today!