



www.arthritis.org
800-283-7800

Protect Your Joints

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

RIGHT



WRONG

When picking up an object, bend and straighten with your knees instead of your back.



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

TASK	RIGHT	WRONG
Carrying objects	Use palms of both hands	DO NOT use your fingers
Climbing stairs	Go up by leading with stronger leg; go down leading with weaker leg.	DO NOT put pressure on your weaker leg
Lifting objects	Hold items close to your body	DO NOT put pressure on your arms, hands or back
Opening jar	Use the palm of your hand or a jar opener	DO NOT grasp or twist your fingers
Traveling	Divide travel items into two equal loads or use a suitcase with wheels	DO NOT carry unequal loads

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!

This brochure has been reviewed by the AMERICAN COLLEGE OF RHEUMATOLOGY.



MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Arthritis Foundation is to improve lives through leadership in the prevention, control and cure of arthritis and related diseases.



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