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Strengthening Exercises

EXERCISE CAN HELP PEOPLE WITH ARTHRITIS.

Starting to exercise can be hard, but in a short time you will feel better. When you feel better you will enjoy exercise and life much more.

Three types of exercises that should be in your exercise program:

- Range-of-motion exercises
- Strengthening exercises
- Endurance exercises

This guide will help you learn strengthening exercises. These exercises will make you stronger. And being stronger can help your arthritis pain.

Two common types of exercises that will make you stronger are:

- **Isometric** (eye-so-MET-ric) exercise is when you tighten your muscles but do not move your joints. These exercises help you build muscle without having to move painful joints.

- **Isotonic** (eye-so-TON-ic) exercise is when you move your joints to make your muscles more strong.

All of these exercises are special types for people with arthritis.

Talk to your doctor before you start any type of exercise program.

Remember the two-hour pain rule: Exercise might make your muscles sore. But it should relieve your arthritis pain. If the pain is worse two hours after you finish, then you may have exercised too much.

EXERCISES THAT MAKE YOU STRONGER

Do these exercises every other day.

EXAMPLES OF ISOMETRIC EXERCISES

- **Leg sets** - tighten the large muscle at the front of your thigh
- **Rear end sets** - tighten the muscles in your buttocks



This exercise makes the muscles that bend and straighten your knee stronger.

1. Sit in a straight-backed chair and cross your ankles.
2. Your legs can be straight, or you can bend your knees.
3. Push forward with your bottom leg and press backward with your top leg.
4. Push the same with both legs. Your legs should not move.
5. Hold your legs like this until you count for six to 10 seconds.
6. Relax.
7. Then change leg positions and repeat the exercise.

EXAMPLE OF ISOTONIC EXERCISE

This exercise makes your thigh muscle stronger.

1. Sit in a chair with both feet on the floor. Hold your feet slightly apart.
2. Raise one foot until your leg is straight.
3. Hold the leg up and count out loud for six to 10 seconds.
4. Gently lower your foot to the floor.
5. Relax.
6. Then do the exercise with your other leg.



Water exercise can help strengthen muscles. By doing the exercises in water you get a harder work out. But it is easier on your joints.

Remember:

- Talk to your doctor about the exercises that are best for you.
- Always cool down after exercising!
- Keep a positive attitude about yourself and your exercise program.
- You will get better at doing these exercises the more you do them.
- The more you do them the better you will feel.

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:

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