

10 Ways to Improve Your Life With Arthritis

People living with arthritis are often dismayed by how much the disease steals from their lives. Physical limitations imposed by arthritis -- caused by chronic pain, chronic fatigue, stress and more -- can narrow their world and interrupt living a "normal life."

For a person living with arthritis, all energy is consumed just trying to accomplish ordinary tasks and usual daily activities. Their focus can become limited to just "getting through the day." Arthritis starts to take control of the person, rather than the person taking control of the arthritis.

- How can you better manage your illness?
- What modifications can you make to your lifestyle to make living with arthritis easier?
- What actions can you take to gain and maintain control over the limitations imposed by arthritis?

1 - Stay Positive

Arthritis is an unpredictable disease, as is the future. Accepting new realities and redefining life within the limitations imposed by disease is important for people with arthritis. Positive attributes can help you manage life with chronic arthritis.

- Living in a "Normal World"
- A Positive Approach to Arthritis
- Arthritis Can Create Awkward Situations

2 - Trust Your Doctor

Doctors play an essential role in the treatment of arthritis. Choosing a doctor is one of the most critical decisions you make when it comes to your condition. It is imperative that your needs are being met. Find a compassionate, communicative doctor you can trust.

- Should You Change Doctors?
- 10 Reasons to Fire Your Doctor
- Patient Education - Can You Know Too Much?

3 - Accept Your Situation

Don't fight the fact that you have arthritis or that your condition changes your life. Don't deny that you have the disease, nor underestimate its impact. Once you accept that you have a chronic illness and that it is a part of your life for the rest

of your life, the decisions you make will be better for you and will ultimately improve your life. You must internalize the acceptance -- feel it, don't just say it.

- Denial Versus Acceptance: Do I Really Have Arthritis?
- Problem Solving: Declare Your Independence

4 - Set Realistic Goals

Set realistic goals for yourself. Through reflection and contemplation, you can assess what you are not happy with and work to change those circumstances. Be sensitive to your innermost feelings. You can focus and begin to make necessary changes in your life.

- 12 Steps for Setting Goals
- Arthritis Impinges on Quality of Life

5 - Be Informed

If you have been diagnosed with arthritis, it's important to learn all that you can about the disease. The importance of knowledge and understanding your health condition cannot be overstated. Stay informed -- subscribe to our newsletter.

- What is Arthritis?
- I Think I Have Arthritis. Now What?
- 10 Things You Should Know About Arthritis

6 - Protect Your Joints

Joint protection can reduce stress on arthritic joints and decrease pain. There are several joint protection principles which, if followed, will help to conserve energy and preserve joint function.

- How to Protect Your Joints
- Joint Protection Advice for People With Arthritis
- Test Yourself - Do You Use Joint Protection Techniques?

7 - Manage Your Medications

When your doctor hands you a new prescription, it becomes your responsibility to know what the medication is for, how to take it, and what possible side effects might occur. Medication errors have many causes, but usually have one thing in common -- they could have been prevented.

- How to Spot Pharmacy Errors
- Review Prescription Label Directions
- 10 Things You Should Do When Given a New Prescription

8 - Keep Active

The benefits of exercise as part of a treatment program for managing arthritis are well-known and documented. Despite the known benefits, many people with arthritis avoid exercising regularly.

- Exercise: Essential Treatment for Arthritis
- How Do Arthritis Patients Perceive Exercise?
- Over One-Third of People With Arthritis Get No Exercise

9 - Watch Your Weight

Being overweight, even just moderately, impacts weight-bearing joints and can increase joint pain. As you walk, your hips, knees, and ankles bear three to five times your total body weight. For every pound you're overweight, the equivalent of three to five pounds worth of added pressure is added to each knee as you walk. The flip side of that is good news: losing just 10 pounds causes 30 to 50 pounds of extra stress to be relieved from the joints.

- Extra Pounds Increase Arthritis Pain
- How to Control Your Weight With Regular Physical Activity
- Sound Weight Loss Advice for People With Arthritis

10 - Seek Mutual Support

Arthritis not only affects people who have the disease, it impacts the people around them, especially family and friends. People living with arthritis and those who have loved ones with the disease can gain insight and draw inspiration from others facing similar challenges. You can share your advice and experiences, offer mutual support, ask questions, and encourage others in our online arthritis forum community.

Courtesy: <http://arthritis.about.com/od/solvingdifficultissues/a/improveyourlife.htm>