



Being Active with Physical Limitations

Remember to check with your doctor before starting a physical activity program.

Don't let arthritis slow you down.

- To help joint movement and make your joints feel less stiff, do stretching exercises almost daily.
- Stretches and exercises are best done when your muscles and joints are warm. Try stretching after doing the dishes, taking a warm bath or after a walk.

Take care of numb or tingly feet or hands.

- Never walk barefoot.
- Keep your feet and hands warm.
- Use tools with thicker grips to help you hold them easily.

Manage breathing problems.

- Break your activity into 5- and 10-minute blocks of time. Rest in between if you need to, then try to do a few minutes more.
- Wait an hour after eating before you exercise.
- Try being active soon after taking your breathing medicine.

Preventing falls

- Be sure that stairwells and halls are well lit.
- Take your time on steps and curbs. Look at the steps.
- On icy days, walk with a friend or do indoor activities.
- Put nonskid backing on rugs.
- If reaching makes you dizzy, put things on low shelves.
- Strength training and stretching exercises will help your balance. Walking and strength training will strengthen your bones.

Work on upper body stretches.

- Upper body stretches can make it easier to do everyday activities like reaching for things, getting dressed, and doing household chores.
- Do upper body exercises.

Work on neck flexibility.

- Neck flexibility makes it easier to do everyday activities like turning your head.
- Do gentle neck exercises.

Get a grip!

- Squeeze a soft ball to improve the strength of your grip.
- Use special equipment to help open jars or grasp things.
- Use foam rubber and tape to build up handles on your tools.

Protect your back and leg muscles.

- Good leg and lower back flexibility can help you prevent back injuries and reduce muscle soreness.
- Use raised garden beds or long-handled tools.
- Bend your knees and not your back when lifting.
- Try back stretches.

Do exercises that slowly increase your strength.

- Strong muscles can help prevent pain and injury.
- Use a stretch band looped around a heavy object like a table leg.
- Climb stairs, a few at a time, to increase leg strength.

Move a little more every day.

- Movement gets oxygen to your muscles.
- Do activities that use large muscles—try walking or vacuuming.
- Build up! Start with 5-10 minutes of walking at one time, and increase by 2-3 minutes every few days, until you can comfortably do 30 minutes.