



# spotlight on health

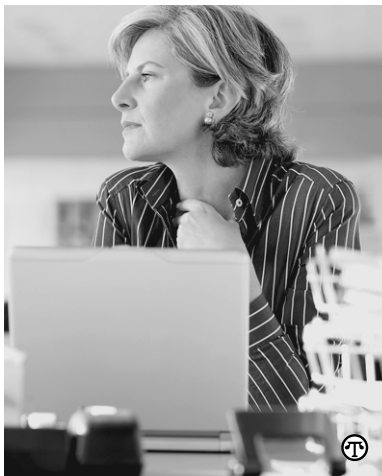
## Feel Comfortable at Work, Even With Rheumatoid Arthritis

(NAPSA) — Every now and again, we get up and go to work despite feeling less than perfect. But if you have a chronic disease like rheumatoid arthritis (RA), you may have that feeling more often because it can be physically painful to get out of bed.

More than two million Americans have RA, the majority of whom are women. Despite what many believe, RA doesn't only affect the elderly. In fact, onset usually occurs between the ages of 25 and 50, affecting people in the prime of their lives when they are raising families and/or building a career.

People with RA may experience pain and fatigue that can affect their ability to work. In fact, an online survey of people with RA taking traditional disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs) indicated that approximately half of respondents felt less productive at work because of their condition.

"As an occupational therapist, I've taught many people with RA simple strategies they can use to help them better function around work," says Joan Rogers, Ph.D., OTR/L, board member of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA). "For instance, staying in certain positions for extended periods of time can create more pain and stiffness in your joints. Depending on



the severity of your condition, try to increase your physical activity throughout the day by stretching frequently at your desk, taking a brisk walk at lunch, taking a longer route when getting up to use the photocopier or fax machine or parking a bit further away from the office."

The good news is that there are treatments available that can help people with RA. "RA is progressive by nature—that means if it is not treated early, it can cause irreversible joint deterioration, which can worsen over time and lead to permanent deformity or disability," says Dr. Bernard Rubin, D.O., M.P.H., Professor of Medicine and Chief, Division of Rheumatology at the University of North Texas Health Science Cen-

ter. "That's why early and aggressive therapy is so important in the treatment of this disease. Biologic medications are a newer type of medication, which treat the signs and symptoms of moderate to severe RA. Some biologics also help limit joint deterioration."

Dr. Rogers has a few other tips for while you're at work: "The best action I can recommend for people with RA is to create an ergonomically correct workspace, take frequent breaks to keep your joints from stiffening, and proactively see a rheumatologist to talk about treatment," she says.

For more information about RA and tips from Dr. Rogers about how to better deal with RA at work, visit [www.RAontheJob.com](http://www.RAontheJob.com).

### Dr. Rogers' Tips to Better Manage RA in the Workplace:

- Increase your physical activity throughout the day by taking frequent breaks to stretch stiff joints and sore muscles.
- Create an efficient workstation by requesting an ergonomic evaluation, which can improve the design and layout of a workstation.
- Prioritize your work to avoid increased stress levels.
- Visit a rheumatologist, a doctor that specializes in the treatment of RA, to discuss available treatment options. 