



FITNESS FACTS

Fitness Tips For People Living With Pain

(NAPSA)—Contrary to conventional wisdom, exercise may provide some relief for chronic pain sufferers. Studies show that arthritis sufferers can help manage their pain through physical activity.

“When people rest they become what we call de-conditioned, meaning their muscles and joints lose their associated range of motion and strength which lessens their ability to perform the activities of daily living,” says Annie O’Connor, PT, OCS a practicing physical therapist and corporate director of musculoskeletal practice, Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Ill. “This de-conditioning process can lead to further problems that may perpetuate the pain.”

Engaging in a regular exercise program can help keep your body in top shape, promote weight loss, relieve stress and reduce your risk of injury by increasing bone and muscle mass. In addition, during physical activity your body releases certain chemicals called endorphins, which block pain signals from reaching your brain.

Here are some tips for starting and sticking to an exercise program:

- Check with your doctor before starting any fitness program.
- Pick one type of activity (i.e., walking, tennis, etc.) you enjoy and want to do more of.
- Initially do a little bit of the activity, enough that does not produce any change in your symptoms. This is your baseline; add one to five minutes more of this activity a day to progress to the level you are interested in doing.
- Set simple goals like a walk



You may be able to manage arthritis pain with exercise.

around the block, then over time progress to longer-range goals (a more intense hike in the park).

- Don’t let minor flare-ups stop you. They’re just your body’s warning response to the unaccustomed level of activity. Simply lowering the intensity of your workout will allow your body to recoup and your symptoms will usually subside in a week depending on how much over-activity was done. Then you can return to progressing.

The good news is that if you stick with your activity routine for six months, chances are it will become a habit. So it’s important that you don’t let minor pain or stiffness get in the way of your daily workout. ThermaCare® HeatWraps provide at least eight hours of consistent, low-level therapeutic heat which provides temporary relief from the most common types of arthritis-related pain. Rheumatoid arthritis sufferers should talk to a doctor before using heat. To learn more about how heat can help you, visit www.thermacare.com.