

Being active with arthritis

Being active can help you to manage the symptoms of arthritis. Exercise can help limit pain and maintain mobility, as well as boost energy.

Here's how you can get started.

- > **Choose an exercise that you'll enjoy** or perhaps revisit one that you've enjoyed in the past.
- > **Strengthening, cardiovascular and mobility exercises** have all been shown to be helpful for arthritis, but the type is less important than the enjoyment factor and sticking to it long term.
- > **There are no exercises** that are off limits, at least in principle. Sometimes care needs to be taken and stepping stone exercises might be required, but any exercise you manage to do will be helpful in the long term.
- > **Start off at a lighter intensity** and then build up slowly, allowing yourself time to accommodate an increase in intensity.
- > **Some pain or even a slight increase in pain is ok** during and after exercise, but it should settle back to pre-exercise levels in 24 hours, not be too severe, or coincide with protracted swelling, heat or redness of joints.
- > **It might be appropriate to start** your exercise in the pool where the decreased weight bearing will be more comfortable. Running, squats and lunges are all possible and practicing in the pool first will allow some time for your body to get used to the movements.
- > **Choosing the right environment** for you might require some experimentation. The gym is not the only option. For some, exercising with a partner will be motivating, whilst others might find it distracting. *Pick your preferences, but be open to trying different options.*
- > **Consider your other health needs.**
Diet, sleep, limiting smoking and keeping stress as low as possible are all just as important to help manage arthritis symptoms.
- > **If you get stuck**, don't know where to begin, or are struggling with the symptoms, consult a physiotherapist who can complete a comprehensive assessment and give you guidance on how to implement your program.

For more ideas and advice, visit: www.csp.org.uk/activity