



Tips for Living With Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)

Living with RA can be a challenge for many patients. But there are things you can do to help manage your RA. Research suggests that people who take part in their own care have less pain and make fewer visits to the doctor. Be open and honest when you talk with your doctor. Together you and your doctor can find a plan to manage your RA.¹

Talk with your doctor or rheumatologist about what activities may be right for you or if you have any questions about living with RA.



Exercise^{1,2}

Choosing an exercise program depends on your physical ability and changing needs. Talk with your doctor about an exercise program that is right for you.* This may include:

- Stretching
- Weights/resistance training
- Aerobics, such as walking or biking
- Tai chi or yoga

*Talk with your doctor before starting an exercise program.



Reduce Stress on Joints¹

You may want to talk to your doctor about ways you can ease the stress on your joints while you do your daily activities. Some things may include:

- Splints (usually on wrists and hands)
- Self-help tools, such as zipper-pullers or long-handled shoehorns
- Products to help with getting on or off chairs, toilet seats, and beds



Eat a Healthy Diet³

It is not yet fully known whether or not what you eat has an impact on your arthritis. Your doctor can help you create a healthy diet to keep your weight at the right level.



Rest¹

People need different amounts and lengths of rest. In talking with your doctor, he or she can help you decide how much rest you need. The goal:

- Striking a good balance between rest and your daily activities that is right for you

Together, you and your doctor can find a plan to manage your RA.

References 1. National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS). Handout on health: rheumatoid arthritis. 2009. http://www.niams.nih.gov/Health_Info/Rheumatic_Disease/default.asp. Accessed May 20, 2012. 2. American College of Rheumatology. Exercise and arthritis fact sheet. Atlanta, GA: American College of Rheumatology, 2012. http://www.rheumatology.org/practice/clinical/patients/diseases_and_conditions/exercise.asp. Accessed June 4, 2012. 3. Koch C. Nutrition and rheumatoid arthritis. The Johns Hopkins Arthritis Center website. <http://www.hopkinsarthritis.org/patient-corner/diseasemanagement/rheumatoid-arthritis-nutrition/>. Accessed August 28, 2012.