

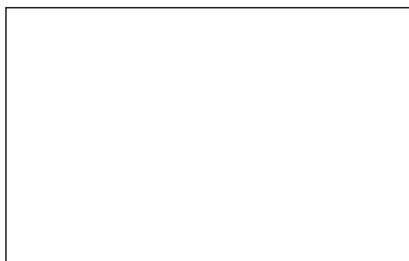
**ARTHRITIS**  
**QUALITY OF LIFE**  
**LIVING WITHOUT PAIN**

**Further information**

Quality of Life is the theme for World Arthritis Day 2005, with a focus on 'Living without Pain.' For further information please go to:  
**www.worldarthritisday.org**

**PARE Manifesto** is committed to raising public awareness of the scale and impact of arthritis/rheumatism across Europe.

**Contact your local PARE Manifesto representative for more details:**



**You can contact the PARE Manifesto Secretariat at:**

PARE Manifesto Secretariat  
c/o Arthritis Care  
18 Stephenson Way  
London NW1 2HD  
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Please note: the contact address was accurate as of June 2005. If you are having difficulty making contact with PARE Manifesto please go to the website.

Other titles in this series for World Arthritis Day include:  
*Early Diagnosis: Less Damage, Less Pain!*



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The visuals used are for illustrative purposes only. There is no suggestion that the individuals portrayed have any of the diseases discussed.



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## ARTHRITIS: LIVING WITHOUT PAIN

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This leaflet aims to provide you with up-to-date information to help you make informed decisions about your own pain management. The leaflet maps out the various options currently available to self-manage pain, from tried-and-tested methods and treatments to innovative advances in research and home living, offering both social and medical ways to self-manage pain.

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## UNDERSTAND YOUR PAIN

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### Understand your pain, regain control

Take time to explore your emotions. Coming to terms with a diagnosis of arthritis is not easy but there are lots of practical steps that may help you gain control of your pain and your life. Pain is common and can be modified through simple lifestyle change. You know your body the best and it is easier for you to help yourself, than listening to a professional.

### Different perceptions of pain

Everyone is different—experience and perception of pain varies between individuals. Take some time to think about how your pain affects you. Think about your feelings about arthritis, how you feel about the disease as well as how the pain makes you feel. It may help to discuss this with your doctor or healthcare team to help them give you the best advice for optimising your lifestyle.

### Depression

Depression is extremely common and like any other illness, the sooner you seek treatment, the quicker you will find relief for your condition. It is important to find someone you feel comfortable talking to—this could be a member of your family, a friend or your doctor. Don't be afraid or embarrassed to ask for help and support when you need it. If you feel that you are depressed, counselling may help—ask your healthcare team for further information about local counselling services.

### Sense of humour

Laughter really can be the best medicine. Humour offers a brief respite from arthritis stress and provides both tension and pain relief. The act of laughing, optimism and putting things into perspective can help you deal with the pain of arthritis.

## YOUR SOCIAL LIFE

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### Building activities into your daily life

Many people find arthritis a tiring disease particularly if they are in pain. Rest when you are tired and don't force yourself to work or exercise through pain. It might not be possible to always achieve everything you want to in one day, so make a list of the things you need to do, in order of importance. Then, try and split these jobs, don't mow the lawn all at once, do half in the morning and half in the afternoon. Be flexible—if you are having a bad day, be prepared to change your plans.

Try to be organised. Review your “to do list” regularly to ensure you are setting realistic goals and not putting yourself under unnecessary pressure. Find leisure activities that are not only easily achievable but also personally satisfying. Go for a walk, but take regular breaks and this will help you complete your tasks. Visit an occupational therapist to discover ways you can save time and energy.

## Arthritis aids for everyday living:

- **Comfortable footwear is one of the most important considerations for people with arthritis. The key things to choose are: A thick soft sole (could be air-filled), no raised heel, a broad forefoot to allow your toes to spread and a deep shoe with a soft upper to avoid chaffing on the top of the foot**
- **Getting shoes on and off is much easier with a long-handled shoe horn**
- **Are things in your house too low? High seated chairs are easier to get out of, or raising the bed, e.g. with bricks or wood, will help you get in and out more easily, or you could look into bed hoists and handle systems**
- **A buttonhook makes buttoning your shirts or blouses easier—simply slip the hook around a button and then pull it through the buttonhole**
- **Zippers can be made easier to use by attaching a finger ring through the “eye” of the zipper tab**
- **There are many kitchen gadgets now available, for example to help you open jars, bottles or plugs, which are easier to pull in and out of the socket**
- **Your local garage can advise you on how to modify your car to make driving easier and safer**

## Relationships

Arthritis is a family affair in many ways. While you may be the one with the disease, it ultimately affects everyone else in the family, for example, spouses may pick up more of the household responsibilities. We all change through the years but arthritis brings on many changes suddenly. It is important to talk to family and friends and learn how to communicate about how these changes make you feel.

## Sexual Relationships

Modern papers and magazines often give the impression that everyone else has a perfect sex life. It is important to realise that this is not the case and that many people experience difficulties with relationships or with sex. Arthritis can certainly present additional problems but the arthritis is not necessarily responsible for any difficulties you may have with your relationships or sex life.

Sex can be physically demanding and may cause discomfort, particularly when the hips or back are involved. If sex is a regular part of your relationship, then you should continue as it is not going to worsen your arthritis. However, to reduce the discomfort you may need to talk candidly to your partner and discuss alternative methods or positions.

## Healthy diet

A good diet is important for maintaining your general health and is very important for a disease like arthritis. Diet affects both your well-being and how positive you feel. If you are overweight, you put additional stress and strain on your joints, which will increase the pain. A healthy diet will help you reduce your weight, which will lessen the pressure on weight-bearing joints, and therefore potentially the amount of pain you experience.

## Healthy Diet Checklist:

- Choose a variety of foods from all the food groups every day
- Eat plenty of plant foods (bread, cereal, rice, pasta, vegetables and fruit)
- Eat moderate amounts of animal foods (milk, yoghurt, cheese, lean meat, fish, poultry and eggs)
- Eat small amounts of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated margarines and oils
- Avoid saturated fats like butter, dripping and palm oil
- Drink lots of water



## Are you getting a good night's sleep?

You may have difficulty getting a good night's sleep due to pain, stress or a medication. In addition, you may be fatigued at bed time but not physically tired due to reduced physical activity.

## Tips for getting a good night's sleep:

- Relax your mind
- Exercise regularly
- Create a calm and comfortable bedroom environment
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine before bed
- Don't eat a heavy meal just before bed
- Set a regular bedtime and wake up time
- Nap if you need to, but avoid napping for longer than 20 minutes
- Consult your doctor if the problem continues



“I wasn’t sure if a self-help group would be for me but I attended a session with a friend and I’m glad I went. It’s a comfort to know that I’m not alone and it was great to swap stories and experiences.”

## EXPRESS YOURSELF

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### Expressing your pain through creative channels

Artistic expression of your pain can help alleviate your symptoms. Writing, painting and photography can help you express your emotions.

Don’t give up activities you enjoy because of your arthritis. Instead, modify hobbies and adapt your equipment to make it easier for you to stay active. If you need advice on how to adapt, check with your doctor, a physical therapist or an occupational therapist. Alternatively—be inventive and try things out, it may just work!

### Self help groups

Talk to people who have gone through what you are experiencing. They may not have identical experiences but they can tell you about things that helped them. You are not alone, and do not have to make these adjustments by yourself. There are always people who can listen to you and help. Most people find talking through their experiences helpful.



**“Creating some raised beds and using pots and window boxes means I can avoid bending and I’ve bought new tools with larger ‘easy-grip’ handles to make planting and weeding easier. I may have arthritis but I can still enjoy my gardening.”**

## EXERCISE YOUR PAIN

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Regular aerobic exercise (exercise which gets you breathing more heavily and your heart beating faster) helps to:

- Reduce or maintain body weight
- Control blood sugar (good for everyone but especially helpful for diabetics)
- Maintain mobility and muscle strength, allowing daily activities to be undertaken more easily
- Improve mood

Exercise for people with arthritis may need to be modified to allow painful joints to move more easily. You should seek advice on this from a chartered physiotherapist, a specialist nurse, rheumatologist or other health professional with knowledge of your condition. Gentle, regular exercise can reduce arthritis pain and improve mobility in the long term and is a safe option to reduce your pain. A simple step forward can make a big difference, but exercise needs to be done regularly.

Many people believe they should rest their arthritic joints to prevent further damage. However, the right kind of exercise is not only beneficial but essential for keeping the joints mobile and the muscles strong. Prolonged rest leads to more stiffness and weakens the muscles, while having no effect on pain. The best type of exercise is to mix both aerobic and muscle strengthening exercises. As you begin to see progress, be sure to continue with your program to maintain results.

Patient groups in your country may offer group exercise sessions, or advice on the best exercises for you, so please contact your local organisation (details on the back page of this leaflet) for more information.

## Exercise action plan:

- **Maintain exercise regularly—this should be a lifestyle change to stick to. Try to associate the exercise with a normal activity, e.g. before showering, and then it is easier to stick to and becomes routine. Alternatively, if this doesn't work for you, a group activity may help you stick to your regime**
- **Pick a time when you experience the least pain and when you won't be tired or interrupted**
- **Start your exercise with some gentle movements to warm up the body and loosen the joints**
- **Include mobility, strengthening and fitness exercises in your plan**
- **Mixing aerobic and muscle-strengthening exercises has an additive effect on your fitness regime**
- **Balance exercise with rest: tiredness may increase the risk of injury**
- **Build up slowly, don't push yourself too hard too early—don't exercise through pain**
- **Cool down at the end of your exercise with some gentle stretches**

## Mobility, strengthening and fitness

The three essential elements of any exercise routine:

### 1. Mobility

Exercises designed to maintain or improve the range of movement of the joints. They involve moving each joint as far as it will comfortably go and then stretching it just a little further—**but not to the point of pain.**

### 2. Strengthening

Exercises designed to increase the power of the muscles. Strong muscles help to support joints. Strengthening exercises also help improve balance. Strengthening and aerobic exercises should be mixed for maximum effect.

### 3. Fitness

These are the aerobic exercises that will benefit the heart, lungs and your general well-being. They usually exercise the “whole body” rather than target a specific joint. Aerobic exercise reduces the pain for the longterm, and it doesn't matter which part of the body you move as any aerobic exercise will have a beneficial effect on pain. Examples include swinging your arms quickly, fast walking or leg pull-ups on the bed.

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## Exercise ideas

Varying your exercise can keep you on track and engaged. Consider adding the following:

### Stretching

Stretches can be done at any time of day, even whilst watching television. Always finish every workout with additional stretching.

### Hydrotherapy

Submerging yourself in water relieves your body from the constant pull of gravity and gives a massage-like feeling. Movement in water also gives more resistance, which strengthens muscles, whilst being kinder on the joint.

### Yoga

This is an excellent way to stretch and flex the body, develop breathing awareness and help with relaxation. As there are many types of Yoga, you need to choose the one that best suits you. Hatha yoga (“the yoga of vitality”)—is an easy-to-learn basic form of yoga best performed in a calm, meditative mood. The idea is to perform the various poses in a series, slowly, with control and grace. Do not overdo the poses or try to compete with others. Take it easy and enjoy! Your physiotherapist can advise you on the most appropriate form of yoga according to your condition.

### Pilates

A method of exercising performed on a mat designed to stretch, strengthen and balance the body. With an emphasis on breath control, core conditioning and body awareness, pilates exercise can streamline your body without building bulk or stressing your joints.

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## Alexander Technique

The Alexander Technique works to change habits in our everyday activities, such as poor sitting posture. It is a simple and practical method, taught by a teacher, for improving ease and freedom of movement, balance, support and coordination. The technique teaches the use of the appropriate amount of effort for a particular activity, giving you more energy for all of your activities. It is not a series of treatments or exercises, but rather a re-education of the mind and body.



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## Massage

There are many types of massage, which include:

**Relaxation Massage:** A smooth, flowing style that promotes general relaxation, improves circulation and range of movement, and relieves muscular tension.

**Aromatherapy Massage:** Combining the therapeutic properties of essential oils with specific massage techniques to promote health and well-being.

**Reflexology:** Using thumb and finger pressure on the reflex points of the feet, which correspond to all areas of the body, to assist in achieving balance within the body.

**Oriental Massage Therapies:** Oriental-based systems of finger pressure massage, such as Acupressure and Shiatsu, that treat points along the acupressure meridians, aiming to release discomfort and rebalance energy. Some benefits of Shiatsu include:

- Reduced stress & fatigue accumulated in the body
- Increased circulation of blood and lymph
- Reduced blood pressure and muscle stiffness
- Increased vitality, stamina and energy

There are exercise options other than those mentioned here. Take the time to see which one suits you best. If the first few types of exercise do not work—don't give up, try another! Talk to your doctor or another healthcare professional to review your exercise routine and to discuss any problems you may have that are associated with your exercise program.

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## YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM

### How to talk about pain with your doctor



There is no medical test that can convey the level of pain you are feeling. Only you can describe your pain. In order to provide an accurate description, it may be helpful to share the answers to the following questions with your doctor:

- How long have you had pain?
- Where is the pain located?
- Does the pain come and go or is it continuous?
- What makes the pain better or worse?
- Has the pain changed since your last visit with your doctor?
- What medications or treatments have you tried for the pain?

### Make the most of visits to your GP or specialist

- Keep a diary of your pain and medication and take it with you when you visit your doctor
- Make a list of the things you want to discuss
- Don't be afraid to ask questions
- Ask your doctor to explain all your treatment options (medications as well as alternative therapies)

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## Specialist clinics

Specialist pain clinics may be available in your country and could help by offering consultation services for pain management. They may be able to offer sound advice to help you handle everyday situations and are fully capable and experienced to treat people with rheumatic pain.

In some countries other healthcare facilities may be available to help you. Speak to your doctor or rheumatologist about the facilities available to you. Alternatively, contact your PARE Manifesto representative in your country, or your national social league, and they will be able to help you. Contact details are on the back of this leaflet, or on the PARE Manifesto website at [www.paremanifesto.org](http://www.paremanifesto.org).

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## TREAT YOUR PAIN



Pain is individual. What works for one person may not work for another, so you should consult with your doctor to find out about different techniques to deal with your pain.

### Options which may help you include:

- Meditation
- Acupuncture
- Massage
- Heat and cold treatments
- Transcutaneous Nerve Stimulation (TENS)
- Hypnosis
- Glucosamine
- Herbal remedies

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## Medications to treat arthritis

Sometimes you may need to take medication to help you manage the pain. However, any medication you take has both beneficial and detrimental effects. In this section we have highlighted the main medication categories, but have not listed all of their uses or side effects. For full details please see the drug information leaflet, which comes with your medicine. Your doctor will assess your medical circumstances and draw your attention to any information or side effects, which may be relevant in your particular case.

### Medications to treat arthritis can be split into four main groups:

#### 1. Painkillers

**Paracetamol:** A simple painkiller used to treat mild-to-moderate arthritis pain. It is usually the first medicine your doctor will recommend if you need pain relief. It is well tolerated and often very effective.

**Opium-derived medicines:** The strongest medication used to treat severe, uncontrolled pain. Your doctor may prescribe a combination of paracetamol and codeine, or tramadol. These painkillers have no effect on your arthritis in terms of preventing inflammation or inhibiting the disease progression, they simply stop you from feeling the pain. Their main side effect is constipation.

#### 2. Painkillers and Anti-inflammatory agents

**Traditional NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs):** Used to treat both pain and inflammation, they are usually the next option if paracetamol failed to control your arthritis pain. If you only have one or two painful areas, especially for hands or knees, NSAIDs applied to the skin (such as creams or patches) can be very useful and effective. Lower

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doses are safer than higher doses, but may have serious side effects, especially on the gut.

Selective cyclooxygenase-2 inhibitors are a newer type of NSAID that are less likely to cause stomach or intestinal problems.

One potential side effect with this class of medication is an increased risk of heart problems. Therefore, these medications should be taken at the lowest dose and for the shortest time possible. Since patient response to medication varies, speak to your doctor about the benefits and risks so you can determine if it is the right treatment for you.

### 3. Disease modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs)

Used to treat people with rheumatoid arthritis who have not responded to NSAIDs, they reduce pain, swelling and stiffness. They do not work at once but may take several weeks. They are thought to influence and correct abnormalities of the immune system that produce rheumatoid arthritis. Treatment with these medications requires careful monitoring by a physician to avoid undesirable side effects.

**Immunosuppressant drugs:** These DMARD drugs work by suppressing the immune system (the body's own defence system). As a result, they may produce side effects, and so need careful monitoring.

**Anti-TNF therapy:** A new class of drugs available for the treatment of severe rheumatoid arthritis. These drugs work by blocking the action of TNF (tumour necrosis factor) a molecule responsible for increasing levels of inflammation in people with rheumatoid arthritis. As yet, the long-term side effects of these medications are not known because they are a new therapeutic option.

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### 4. Corticosteroids

Effective in controlling inflammation and may have some disease-modifying effects. However, if used for a long time (many months) or in high doses they produce side effects. For this reason doctors try to avoid these drugs or use them in as low a dose as possible.

#### Drug treatment monitoring

For some drugs regular checks are needed so that they can be stopped, if necessary, before a serious side effect occurs. Discuss medication options thoroughly with your doctor before starting any medication.



## Surgery

If medicines have not worked, you may require surgery. Your doctor will refer you to an orthopaedic surgeon who can advise you on whether surgery is required. Be sure to discuss options thoroughly with your surgeon, as well as your physiotherapist or occupational therapist.

### What are the options?

The most common kind of surgery is joint replacement (arthroplasty), which involves replacing the ends of each bone in a joint with an artificial joint. Arthroplasty is performed most commonly on the hips or knees. Artificial joints have a long lifespan, with 90% of joints lasting at least 10 years.

### What should you expect?

If you're considering surgery for your arthritis, it's vital that you have a clear idea of what to expect. Knowing all the facts can eliminate surprises and give you confidence about what lies ahead. Ask your family physician/specialist and surgeon what the expected benefits and potential risks are, especially in the long run. Make sure you understand what's expected of you before and after surgery, to maximize benefits and reduce any risks.

The most important benefit of surgery in arthritis is reduced pain—in many cases, no pain in the affected joint—and greatly improved function. Many people enjoy a return of up to 90% of normal function in a joint that's been operated on, with increased mobility and greatly enhanced flexibility.

## Arthritis care checklist:

### Are you taking care of your body?

- Maintain activity
- Exercise regularly to improve your fitness and strength
- Eat a healthy diet
- Make sure you get a good night's sleep

### Are you taking care of your social and emotional needs?

- Join a self help group
- Adapt hobbies to be arthritis friendly
- Track your progress using an arthritis diary

### Are you communicating well with your doctor?

- Organise yourself
- Present your doubts to your doctor
- Find out about all of your treatment options
- Cooperate in your treatment—Don't forget:  
your body, your choice

**ENJOY QUALITY OF LIFE BY  
LIVING WITHOUT PAIN – ACT NOW!**

## Active Management Plan

An example of a diary tool that helps you rate your pain for use in consultation with your GP or specialist. This can then be carried forward and incorporated into your daily self management plan.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Medication taken today							
How is my pain today? Joint affected Pain score (1 least - 10 worst pain)							
What is my mood today?							
Today's achievements							
Today's challenges							