

# TEN TIPS FOR SAFE & EFFECTIVE EXERCISE

- 1 LISTEN TO YOUR BODY - PAIN IS A WARNING.**
  - Remember the Two-Hour Pain Rule. Some muscle soreness is a normal response to exercise; if you develop joint pain that lasts for two hours or more after exercising, reduce exercise intensity and/or duration during the next class.
  - If pain suddenly gets worse during an exercise, stop the exercise.
  - Normal reactions to exercise include increased breathing and heart rate, some sweating, and mild muscle aches. Stop exercising immediately if you experience chest pain, severe shortness of breath, dizziness or nausea.
  - Other unhealthy reactions and signs of overexertion include excessive pain, fatigue, increased weakness and joint swelling.
  - If you have an inflamed joint (one that is hot, red, swollen and painful), gently move it only through a pain-free range of motion.
- 2 MOVE YOUR JOINTS TO THE POINT WHERE YOU FEEL A GENTLE STRETCH.**

Avoid moving in a range of motion that causes more pain than you usually experience.
- 3 MOVE SLOWLY AND GENTLY, GIVING YOUR MUSCLES TIME TO RELAX BETWEEN EACH REPETITION.**

Avoid quick, jerky movements. It is more important to try to reach your joint's full range of motion than it is to increase the speed of the movement.
- 4 COMBINE BREATHING WITH EXERCISING.**

Breathing correctly will help reduce the risk of holding the breath and decrease muscle fatigue. Exhale on the exertion phase of each exercise and inhale as the movement returns to neutral. Counting out loud will help you avoid holding your breath by making you exhale to count.
- 5 BEGIN SLOWLY WITH JUST A FEW REPETITIONS OF EACH EXERCISE AND GRADUALLY ADD MORE REPETITIONS.**

Remember, if you've been inactive for a long time, it will take some time to increase your endurance.
- 6 MOVE AT YOUR OWN PACE. DON'T TRY TO KEEP UP WITH ANYONE ELSE.**

Remember that many people with arthritis have ups and downs, so setbacks may occur. An exercise done easily one day may be too hard the next. Avoid becoming discouraged or stopping - just cut back and do what you can. If you notice a big change in what you can do, contact your healthcare provider.
- 7 NEVER ALLOW ANYONE TO ASSIST YOU IN MOVING YOUR BODY PARTS DURING CLASS.**

Everyone has a different pain-free range of motion and different abilities. Only perform exercises that you are comfortable performing and in your pain-free range of motion. Assisted movement should only be performed by your healthcare provider.
- 8 AVOID RECOMMENDING EXERCISES THAT ARE NOT PART OF THE AFAP/AFEP PROGRAM TO OTHER PARTICIPANTS.**
- 9 MAINTAIN YOUR MEDICAL ROUTINE.**

The AFAP/AFEP exercises do not replace exercises prescribed by your healthcare provider. Continue with prescribed treatments including medication, rest, joint protection, heat and/or cold treatments, etc.
- 10 SOME OF THE EXERCISES INCLUDED IN THE ARTHRITIS FOUNDATION EXERCISE PROGRAM MAY NOT BE HELPFUL FOR PEOPLE WITH SEVERE JOINT PROBLEMS AND THOSE WHO HAVE HAD JOINT REPLACEMENT SURGERY.**

Do not perform any movements you've been told to avoid by your healthcare provider.