

Arthritis

SMARTMOVES

YOUR WAY—EVERY DAY

Get Inspired

Simple Steps to
Help Your OA

.....

**8 Ways to
Stay Upbeat**

.....

Let's Move!

The Surprising
Rewards of
Being Active



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VICKI COLEMAN
"I adapt so I can
do what I love
in spite of my OA."

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FRESH THINKING

Give Up? Never!

No need to retreat from life just because you have osteoarthritis (OA). Get inspired!

Shift your self-assessment. “I always associated osteoarthritis with *old*, but when I look at myself, I don't see *old lady*, I see me.”

—Carole Lynch,
Jacksonville, NC

Try something new.

“After my OA diagnosis, it hurt to stair-climb, which I used to do. So I tried water aerobics. It took getting used to, but I love it now.” —Leigh Hollyer, Houston



New Connections

Many times, the pain and stiffness that accompany osteo-arthritis (OA) can make patients want to scream. While that's certainly one way to vent, it's probably not the most productive! Finding a friend to lend an ear is far more comforting. And debuting later this fall is a supportive online community for women with OA. The site will be an inspiring place for women to share questions, tips, and, yes, “pain” with each other. You'll gain insight from top arthritis experts, as well as follow the ups and downs of some special women who will be opening up about their OA on a regular basis. Check arthritisSMARTmoves.com for updates on the new site.



Ease aches with a homemade heat pack: Fill a new tube sock with rice, microwave for 1 minute.

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The extra pounds

of stress placed on your knees by being only 10 pounds overweight. Even moderate weight loss can reduce joint stress and possibly OA pain.

Source: Johns Hopkins Arthritis Center

Achy Joints? 3 Easy Moves

Spending a few minutes a day doing gentle stretches can go a long way toward easing stiff joints, maintaining a good range of motion, and making daily tasks more comfortable. Here are three good stretches from The Arthritis Foundation and the University of Washington School of Medicine.

Hand stretches Rest your hand on a table, palm down. Spread fingers wide apart and bring them together. Do this several times. Next, make an 'O' by touching thumb to fingertips, one at a time. Open your hand wide each time. Do this several times.

Knee-to-chest stretch Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Bring one knee toward your chest, holding it gently with your hands. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds, then switch legs. This benefits your hips, buttocks, and lower back.

Seated hamstring stretch Sit on the floor and extend one leg, being careful to not lock the knee. Bring the opposite foot in toward the outstretched leg, as shown below. Bending from the hips, gently reach for your toes, keeping your chest and chin up. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds, then switch legs. This helps your hamstrings, hips, knees, and calves.



Sleep Tight

You may think that your osteoarthritis (OA) isn't at the root of sleep issues, but it may be. In fact, hip or knee OA is linked with greater incidence of sleep problems, from insomnia to nighttime awakenings, according to a 2008 study from the Johnston County Osteoarthritis Project, in North Carolina. It becomes a vicious cycle, because a bad night's sleep can make the next day's pain worse, reducing the chances of sound sleep again. Here's help:

- **Talk to your doctor about your sleep issues, and ask about the pain-relief options that may be right for you.**
- **Practice good sleep hygiene: limit caffeine to mornings; avoid daytime naps; and end any exercise and screen time early in the evening.**
- **Consider cognitive behavioral therapy. In a 2009 study, OA patients who took part in therapy sessions reported better sleep and reduced pain.**

PHOTOS, FROM LEFT: PHOTO DISC/GETTY; FSTOP/CORBIS; OCEAN/VEER



Walk Like A Nordic Skier

Using poles that look like ski poles, walking the "Nordic" way provides a good aerobic workout. It also reduces the strain on knees because it allows you to transfer the impact of each step from your legs to the poles. Added bonus: Nordic walking burns up to 20 percent more calories than regular walking. Plus, the poles provide extra support if you have poor balance. For more on the benefits of Nordic walking, to find a workout partner, or join a Nordic walking club near you, visit the American Nordic Walking Association at anwa.us. To learn more about ways walking and other forms of exercise may help your OA, turn to "Your Body in Motion," page 14.

Stretch Your Funny Bone

Laughter has proven benefits for pain relief (who doesn't feel a little better after a "Seinfeld" rerun?), as does yoga. (Small studies indicate yoga may improve joint health. And clinical trials are being formed at the Johns Hopkins Arthritis Center.) So now there's a physical fitness movement called Laughter Yoga which combines the two, and people of all ages and abilities are getting into the spirit. A typical class mixes laughter exercises—which generally begin as forced laughter but that often segue into real guffaws—with yoga breathing and basic poses. Participants show up in comfortable street clothes, and there are no complicated movements. Cancer and stroke patients, senior citizens, schoolchildren, even business executives have benefited from Laughter Yoga sessions. There are thousands of clubs worldwide (many meet in libraries and hospitals). To learn more and find a club near you, visit laughteryoga.org.



If you wake with stiff, swollen hands, wearing snug-fitting stretch gloves to bed may help.

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

**By adapting to her
OA, Vicki Coleman is
doing what she loves—
and then some!**
By Leah Ingram

*Coleman still does
the family cooking,
just modified.*

When it comes to life with osteoarthritis (OA), Vicki Coleman has learned the important lesson of modification. That is, the 58-year-old nurse, who has OA in her hands and right knee, can still knit; she just can't knit for hours at a time. "If I'm watching TV while I'm knitting," says Coleman, of Abington, Pennsylvania, "I know to put my knitting down once the episode is over." When her four daughters come for Sunday dinner each week, she won't deny them the family

favorite, mashed potatoes. "I just get my daughters to peel the potatoes," and then she finishes the secret family recipe herself.

In addition to learning how to modify her activities, Coleman says staying active goes a long way toward feeling good. "The best thing is to exercise and keep the joints moving," she says. She also sees the benefits of warming up for any activity. At least three times a week she goes to the gym, where she rides the recumbent bike for 20 minutes, then walks for 20 minutes on the treadmill. "When something starts to

hurt, you have to ease up or back off," she says.

The results of Vicki's smart approach have been exciting. Last summer, she went sea-kayaking for the first time, spotting dolphins as she paddled. This year, she tried zip lining during a trip to Guatemala. "We had to hike up to 12,000 feet to get to the zip lines," Coleman recalls. While the climb was difficult, "my joints felt fine," she says. It was the altitude that gave her trouble. Nonetheless, the experience left Coleman feeling on top of the world.



PHOTO: BILL CRAMER/WONDERFUL MACHINE; HAIR AND MAKEUP, NIVES RIDDLES



WELCOME BACK!

A three week plan to help you feel more like your good ol' self

The **SMART MOVES PROGRAM** is a 21-day plan that is full of motivational tools to change how you view and cope with osteoarthritis (OA), and help keep you doing the daily activities you love.

We've reached out to some of the top OA, exercise, and psychology experts in the country—people who know what you're going through and know how to help—to create this program designed to empower you to live life on your own terms. The steps are simple and will take just a few minutes a day.

You'll find:

- Walking workouts to help you build strength and endurance
- Stretches to improve your range of motion
- Helpful ways to build a positive approach to managing your OA
- Fresh ideas to lessen pain
- A journal to track your progress, and more

Research has shown that it takes 21 days to change or begin a new habit. So start here. Make this the day you commit to a more vibrant life for today and every day!



Research shows that making simple lifestyle changes can be good for your OA. So set small goals for yourself, take a walk on the beach, and keep doing what you love. This plan will help you in 21 simple ways.



Put Pen to Paper

A key feature to the Smart Moves Program is the journaling section. Use it to record your symptoms, jot down questions to ask your doctor, work through issues, set goals, celebrate your successes, and more.

Here's a sneak peek:

My goals today are _____

Today I felt _____

Today I was able to _____

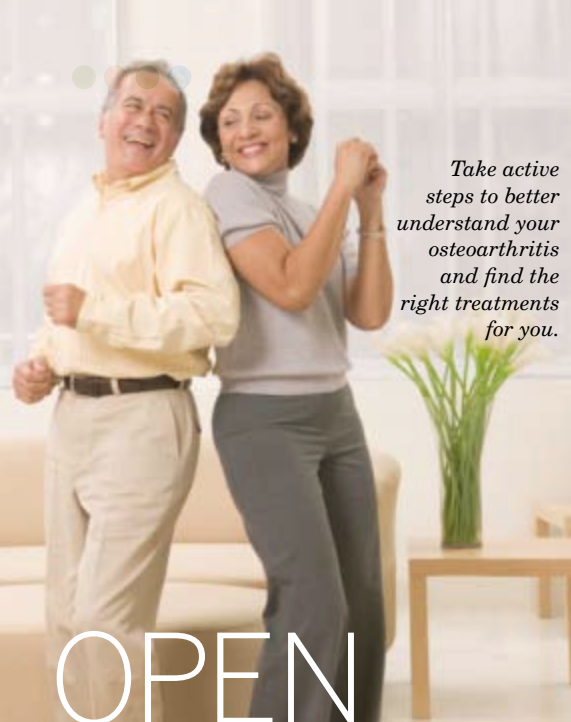
I'd like to ask my doctor _____

I reached my goal for the day []

I will continue to work toward this goal []

PHOTOS: CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: IMAGE SOURCE/GETTY (2); CORBIS YELLOW; IMAGE SOURCE/VEER; BLEND IMAGES/GETTY (2); FUSE/GETTY; POLKA DOT/JUPITER

SMART MOVES ONLINE
 For more information about this program—and a free download—visit arthritissmartmoves.com.



Take active steps to better understand your osteoarthritis and find the right treatments for you.

When X-rays confirmed osteoarthritis (OA) in her knees, Kat Riefler decided she wouldn't let the diagnosis derail her active life. "You can't let arthritis stop you from doing the things you love," says Riefler, a social worker from Streetsboro, Ohio. "Maybe I can't go running. But I love to hike, and I can still do that. I love to dance, too. I turn on CDs and dance all around the house."

If there's any good news about OA, it's this: There are many treatment options and our understanding of the disease continues to improve. If you haven't talked to your doctor about your condition

lately, you may be missing out on the latest treatments and fresh ideas to help you.

"There's no cure for osteoarthritis, but there are ways to lessen the pain," says Scott Zashin, MD, the author of *Arthritis Without Pain*.

Doctors typically prescribe a mix of therapies for OA, such as various drug regimens to ease pain, or weight loss to reduce joint stress. They may also suggest things like cognitive behavioral therapy, relaxation techniques, or keeping a pain diary to help identify your triggers. The choices are many, and the key to narrowing in on the right course of treatment for you begins with opening the lines of communication with your doctor.

For Carol Killmeyer-Alter, a mail carrier for the U.S. Postal Service, OA plus excess pounds proved almost too much. Her doctor's advice? Start an exercise program, as just a small amount of weight loss can make a big difference. After just a few months of aerobic and strengthening exercises, Killmeyer-Alter's knees are

OPEN UP

Gain a sense of control with one simple chat
By Julie Evans



PHOTOS: CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: FUSE/JUPITER; BRANDX/GETTY; TETRA/CORBIS

Conversation Starters

At your next doctor's visit, consider asking:

- What are the best things I can do to help me take better control of my OA?
- Are there any new products or treatments that will help my OA pain?
- Do you know of a support group that I could join?



much better. And with a job she loves and two active grandkids, she's motivated to stick to her new routine. "I've always enjoyed life," she says. "Even on my worst days, I come home, put my feet up for a few minutes, then get up and go. I can't let arthritis stop me."

Chances are that simply having a heart-to-heart with your doctor will give you a similar sense of relief and enough encouragement to take additional proactive steps on your own. As Riefler and Killmeyer-Alter have discovered, the new ways of managing OA may help you live the life you want.

MORE SMART MOVES
Discover additional ways to treat and manage OA with our 21-day plan, page 10.

Determination Pays Off

Mardie Moffitt's mother suffered from osteoarthritis (OA), and Moffitt watched as she, over time, withdrew from daily activities. "My mom stopped doing the stuff that she loved to do," says Moffitt, 62, of Memphis, Tennessee. "I was determined not to have that happen to me." This, despite the fact that Moffitt, who recently retired after 30 years at an air conditioner manufacturer, has OA in her legs, arms, back, knees, and feet.

Driven to not follow in her mother's footsteps, Moffitt joined a gym, changed her eating habits, and began losing weight. Her 17-year-old granddaughter also inspires her to stay active (they walk five miles together three days a week), as does beloved activities like gardening and traveling. Along the way, she's discovered that "the less weight you have on your joints, the better you feel. I'm not as stiff as I once was."—Leah Ingram

Longtime athlete Jackie Yukawa is not about to let the pain and stiffness of osteoarthritis (OA) keep her off her feet. The 61-year-old secretary in Los Angeles may no longer compete in marathons, but she still goes out for a walk-run several times a week, does Pilates, bikes, swims, even surfs. “I know that exercise is what keeps me going,” she says.

You may think Yukawa’s determination is exceptional, or that “ordinary” people with OA aren’t able to—or shouldn’t—work out. But you’d be wrong. If you’ve been responding to the pain and stiffness of OA by not moving—believing that resting aching joints is best—you’ve got it exactly backwards, says A. Lynn Millar, PT, PhD, professor of physical therapy at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, and author of *Action Plan for Arthritis*. “Activity actually decreases the sensation of pain, whereas holding a joint still worsens degeneration.”

The less you exercise, the weaker your muscles become, and weak muscles can’t absorb the force exerted on your joints when you walk, dance, play with your grandchildren, and so on. Plus, exercise is one of the best natural stress-relievers out there.

“It’s something positive you can do to make yourself feel more in control, and less at the mercy of the disease,” explains Steffany Haaz, PhD, of the Johns Hopkins Arthritis Center in Baltimore.

Get up and go!

The good news is that you don’t need to compete in a marathon (or anything close to it!) to get exercise’s benefits. Any workout that gets your heart pumping for at least 20 minutes a day will help your overall health—and your OA. (Get your doctor’s OK first.) “The simplest thing to do is walk,” says Millar. In a recent study, OA patients who participated in a three-day-a-week walking program reported a significant decrease in pain. Swimming, biking, and low-

impact water aerobic classes can also help improve everyday physical function.

Show your strength

Remember that old song “the leg bone’s connected to the hip bone?” Your joints are also connected to the surrounding muscles. Put simply, the stronger the muscles are, the better protected your joints are from degeneration. Working with a trainer or physical therapist knowledgeable about OA is a good idea to create a basic home program. To find one, visit the American Council on Exercise at acefitness.org, which educates trainers about working with OA patients. You may need to modify exercises until you gain strength. If you can’t do, for example, a full squat, the Arthritis Foundation (AF) recommends a seated version (sit on the edge of a chair and stand, raising your arms straight out; repeat). You can find additional strengthening exercises at the AF’s web site, arthritis.org.

Reach for new limits

Staying limber is another critical piece of the exercise puzzle. “If a joint is sore and stiff and you stop moving it, you’ll begin to lose range of motion,” says Millar. The end result: you’ll further limit normal daily activities. (Tip: if you sit for long periods, flex and extend your knee every so often; that way, you’re less likely to feel stiff when you do stand up.)

Yoga, which emphasizes flexibility, strength, and balance, is joint-friendly. As is tai chi, the ancient Chinese exercise practice that promotes balance and mobility through moves that are gentle and flowing.



Fun and good for me?! Where do I sign? Though it sounds counterintuitive, physical activity may help ease the pain of OA.

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SMART MOVES ONLINE
Visit arthritis.smartmoves.com for more inspiring ways to keep moving. .

YOUR BODY IN MOTION

Reap the rewards of staying active
By Denise Schipani



PHOTOS: FROM LEFT: FANCY/CORBIS; BLEND IMAGES/GETTY

FINDING THE BRIGHT SIDE

How to keep positive
through the hard parts
By Doug Donaldson



The power of
upbeat thinking
is contagious.

If **Murphy's Law** is your motto, you may need a little attitude adjustment. Why? "If you don't believe you'll get better, you won't," says Patience White, MD, the vice president of public health for the Arthritis Foundation.

That rings true for Pam Snow, who has osteoarthritis (OA) in her knees. "My glass half-empty thinking wasn't working where arthritis was concerned," says Snow. A few years ago, Snow's motivation to exercise dwindled, and she gained weight, which made her negative perspective even worse. "I let the pain of osteoarthritis take over my life," Snow says.

Caving in to a negative attitude can have direct, physical effects. "Attitude is crucial in chronic conditions like OA," says White. "People who have good ones tend to do better than those who don't."

The best news: "You can train yourself to see and appreciate positive things in your life," says Caroline Adams Miller, MAPP, author of *Creating Your Best Life: The Ultimate Life List Guide*. In Snow's case, adopting an optimistic approach came through her work. "Part of my job is helping seniors become more active again," she says. "I figured I'd better practice what I preached." She launched an exercise program and is now reaping the rewards of a new, brighter outlook.

Sunny Side Up: 8 Ways to Shine

- **Write on.** Studies have found that journaling—expressing your feelings, experiences, and goals on paper—can decrease stress.

Blogging and participating in online communities connects you to others with OA, too.

- **Set big goals, take small steps.** A mix of short- and long-term goals, says Miller, "helps keep a positive attitude." For example, Snow's 10-minute walks have blossomed into hopes for completing a 5K.

- **Take note of the little things.** Paying attention to micro-moments of positive events (such as having a door held open for you) can make you feel happier, research shows. Make it a point to find three a day.

- **Mingle with happy people.** Loneliness has been linked to chronic stress and pain. And studies have shown that social networks can spread happiness. "Behaviors and moods are contagious," says White. "If you have OA, it doesn't make sense to hang out with whiners."

- **Keep your eyes on a prize.** Focus on something that you see as doable with a little help, like wearing high heels or playing with grandkids. Keeping the image of yourself doing those things fresh can be a great motivator, according to White.

- **Spend time with animals.** A furry or feathered friend can ease stress and help you live in the moment. What's more, petting animals releases feel-good hormones in you. And studies show that simply watching animals at play can help restore mental energy.

- **Ask for help.** Feeling laid low by the pain? Enlist loved ones to ease your burden, physically and emotionally.

- **Get involved.** Stay socially active and focus attention away from your OA. Teach literacy to at-risk children, volunteer at the local food bank, make calls for a political candidate. The ways to help others are endless.

Focused On Fun

Polly Schaller became a grandmother for the second time this year. She's determined as ever "not to be a grandmother who can't get on the floor and play with her grandchildren," says the Lafayette Hill, Pennsylvania, resident, who has osteoarthritis in her feet, knees, and lower back. To that end, Schaller, 62, exercises before work every other day, then walks from the train station to her office in Center City, Philadelphia. Should she have any work-related meetings outside the office, she walks to and from those as well.

In her free time, Schaller enjoys traveling—she recently returned from Morocco—and volunteering at her church, where she's also in the choir. And she tries to keep a positive attitude, despite waking up in the morning and feeling stiff. "I work hard to avoid funky moods," she says. "Because if you're in a funky mood, everything hurts." —Leah Ingram



SMART MOVES ONLINE

For more ideas to turn around your thinking, go to arthritisSMARTmoves.com. There you'll find our motivating 21-day program (see page 10)..