

STAY ON THE MOVE

WHAT IS RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS, ANYWAY?

It's when the immune system becomes faulty and attacks joints in the body. They can become inflamed and painful. Besides relieving symptoms, a key goal of treatment is preventing joint damage.

How is rheumatoid arthritis (RA) affecting your life right now?

WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?

- **Staying independent.** By managing your RA, you can slow its progress or even stop it altogether. And that can keep you living well and independently.
- **Keeping pain at bay.** When you're in pain, it interferes with your life. Learning how to boost your body's ability to manage pain lets you do the things you love to do.
- **Feeling energetic.** Fatigue can sap you of your drive to do just about anything. By finding and treating the cause of your fatigue, you can get back on your feet. Doesn't that sound good?
- **Enjoying life.** Managing your RA well can help you feel your best, physically and mentally. And guess what? That's key to enjoying all life has to offer.

TRY THIS AT HOME

People in your life may not understand how RA affects you. Write a simple explanation to use like, "I have pain in my hands. It varies each day, and I can't always do the things I want to do." Practice so the words come easily when you need them.

FIVE WAYS TO GET STARTED



Learn about DMARDs. Ask your healthcare provider if **disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs** might help your RA. These meds can slow or stop joint damage.



Stick to the plan. Understand (and follow) your treatment plan and regularly see your care provider.



Get physical. Exercise can help relieve RA symptoms. Consult your care provider on how you can get active. The ideal: 30 minutes, 5 times a week.



Relaaaaax. Stress may trigger flares. Try this: Sit in a chair that supports your back. Inhale for 4 seconds. Exhale for 6. Do it for 2 minutes. Ahhh.



Track it. Monitor your symptoms, flare triggers and pain levels. Talk about ongoing trends with your care provider so you can best manage your condition.

REALLY? I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

- Green tea has antioxidants that help reduce inflammation and may prevent further joint damage in people with RA.
- Smoking makes RA symptoms worse. Why? It keeps RA meds from working as well as they should. Plus, smokers are less likely to exercise. And exercise relieves symptoms.
- Regular massages designed specifically for arthritis symptoms can help improve pain, stiffness, range of motion, hand-grip strength and overall joint function.
- Too little sleep can make pain feel worse, and pain meds less effective.



PLAN FOR YOUR ROADBLOCKS

We all encounter roadblocks from time to time. Try planning ahead with this technique recommended by personal-change experts: First, envision the benefits of reaching your goal, starting with your personal vision. Then, imagine your biggest roadblocks and how you'll get past them.

ROADBLOCK	STRATEGY
I ache, and I don't want to move.	I'll remind myself that exercise eases symptoms and I'll try, even if it's just 10 minutes.

WRITE YOUR PERSONAL VISION

Create a short phrase capturing a benefit of managing your RA, whichever benefit is most important to you. Say it anytime you start to veer from your new path.

Example: Managing my RA will help me stay independent.

My personal vision

WHO SUPPORTS YOU IN YOUR EFFORTS TOWARD MANAGING YOUR RA?
