



**www.arthritis.org**  
**800-283-7800**

# Range-Of-Motion Exercises

## EXERCISE CAN HELP YOUR ARTHRITIS

People with arthritis can often benefit from a balanced exercise program. The exercises that can help a person with arthritis are easy to do.

For many of us, getting started with exercise is the hardest part. But in a short time you will feel better. When you feel better you will enjoy exercise and your life much more.

## THREE MAIN TYPES OF EXERCISES THAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN YOUR EXERCISE PROGRAM ARE:

- Range-of-motion exercises
- Strengthening exercises
- Endurance exercises

This guide will help you learn some range-of-motion exercises that could help reduce your arthritis pain. “**Range of motion**” is the normal amount your joints can be moved in certain directions.

**Talk to your doctor before you start any type of exercise program.**

## Range-of-motion exercises help:

- Reduce the stiffness in your joints
- Keep your joints flexible

## Before you start doing range-of-motion exercises:

- Check your joints, from head to toe, to see which ones are stiff.
- Exercise the joints that are most stiff.
- Talk to your doctor.

Remember the two-hour pain rule: Exercise might make your muscles sore. But it should relieve your arthritis pain. If the pain is worse two hours after you finish, then you may have exercised too much.

## EXAMPLES OF RANGE-OF-MOTION EXERCISES

Do two sets of each exercise. A set is when you repeat an exercise more than once without a rest in between. You should do an exercise 3 to 10 times in each set.

**DO THESE EXERCISES EVERY DAY.**



**Head turns**

- Look straight ahead
- Turn your head to look over shoulder
- Hold three seconds
- Return to front
- Repeat to other side



**Forward arm reach**

- Put arms out in front, palms facing one another
- Raise one or both arms as high as possible (one arm may help the other, if needed)
- Lower your arms slowly

**Back pat and rub**

- Reach one arm up to pat back
- Reach the other arm behind lower back
- Slide hands toward each other
- Hold it three seconds
- Alternate arm position



**Elbow bend and turn**

- Touch fingers to shoulders, palms toward you
- Turn palms down as you straighten elbows out to side



**Knee lift**

- Sit straight up
- Lift one knee up three or four inches off chair
- Hold three seconds and lower
- Repeat with other knee (you may help by lifting with your hands under your thigh)

**Remember:**

- Always cool down after exercising!
- You can feel better.
- Keep a positive attitude about yourself and your exercise program.
- You will get better at doing these exercises the more you do them.
- The more you do them the better you will feel.

**For more information:** The Arthritis Foundation offers a wide variety of books, brochures and videos about different forms of arthritis, treatment and self-management techniques to help you take control of your arthritis. To order any of these products, become an Arthritis Foundation member or to subscribe to the Arthritis Foundation's award-winning consumer health magazine, *Arthritis Today*, call (800) 283-7800. Call or visit our Web site ([www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org)) to find out how you can take control of your arthritis and start living better today!

This brochure has been reviewed by the AMERICAN COLLEGE OF RHEUMATOLOGY.

**MISSION STATEMENT:**

The mission of the Arthritis Foundation is to improve lives through leadership in the prevention, control and cure of arthritis and related diseases.



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