

WHAT IS JOINT PROTECTION?

Joint Protection is about using your body in different ways to reduce the amount of stress on sore joints. Research has shown that by using joint protection methods people experience reduced pain, less stiffness in the morning and fewer flare-ups.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MYSELF?

Many day to day activities can place extra stress on your joints. This can lead to increased pain and fatigue and reduce stamina. Some days your health will dictate what you can and can't do.

This can be frustrating. By making changes early on you can help to avoid problems becoming worse in the future.

- Look after your joints – reducing strain should help to ease aches and pains.
- Pace yourself, plan ahead, and decide on your priorities to avoid becoming so tired.
- Try to get a good night's sleep.
- Keep to your ideal weight to reduce pressure on the hips, knees and feet.
- Try to keep as fit as possible, and to build up muscle stamina through regular exercise.
- Do hand exercises most days to improve your grip.

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THE PRINCIPLES OF JOINT PROTECTION

● Respect pain

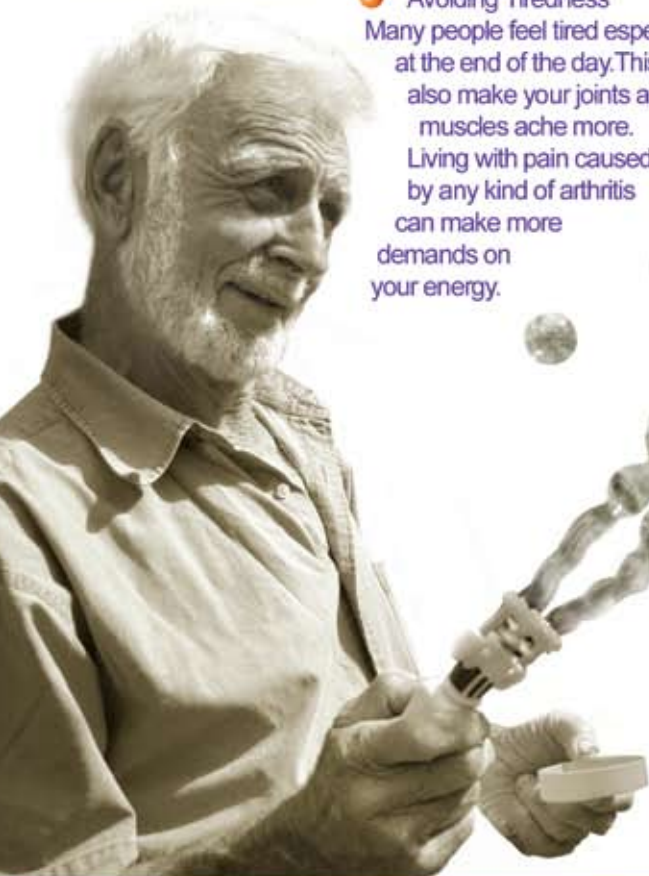
Pain is your body's way of protecting itself – if you feel pain during an activity STOP and rest. If you still have pain an hour after doing an activity, you have done too much. Remember to do less next time or build in short breaks. Remember pain is not a message from your body to eliminate the activity, rather it is a suggestion from your body to proceed more carefully.

● Positioning

Use each joint in the most stable position, being conscious of your posture. Change position from one which puts strain on particular joints to one which spreads the weight evenly over several joints. A Physiotherapist or Occupational Therapist may recommend the use of splints or other aids to provide support.

● Avoiding Tiredness

Many people feel tired especially at the end of the day. This can also make your joints and muscles ache more. Living with pain caused by any kind of arthritis can make more demands on your energy.



THINGS YOU CAN DO TO SPREAD YOUR ENERGY FURTHER.

- Pace yourself.
- Plan ahead and set priorities.
- Find the best position for the job you are about to do.
- Get better organised.
- Get a good night's sleep.

HOW CAN I PACE MYSELF BETTER?

Take a break for a few minutes every half hour. Change activities regularly and swap between light and heavier jobs. For example, after vacuuming a room, do some dusting, then sit down and take a break.

When mowing the lawn, take a break before you get tired, change to a lighter job and go back to mowing later when you feel rested.

HOW CAN I GET BETTER ORGANISED?

Look at how you are doing things and see if you can organise the job better.

Make sure you have all the things you need at hand before you start. Ask yourself.



- Can any part of the job be cut out or done more efficiently?
- Can you sit rather than stand to work?
- Can you slow down a bit?

Doing an activity the easiest way possible is best; this means taking an honest look at the methods, routines and habits you have developed and deciding how you can save energy.

Remember that there are many practical devices and changes that can be made to assist with daily activities, talk this over with your local Arthritis Educator or Health Professional.

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