

About Arthritis

Arthritis is a very common condition that causes:

- fatigue
- pain
- swelling
- decreased motion
- stiffness in one or more joints.

There are many types of Arthritis. It can affect many joints within the body, however it common affects a person's:

- knees and hips
- neck and back
- feet
- hands.

The word 'arthritis' literally means 'inflammation of the joint'.

Protecting Your Joints

Pain can be your body warning you have too much stress on joints.

You may need to stop what you are doing, rest more often or change the activity (for example, allow dishes to air dry rather than wiping them).

It is best to use larger, stronger body joints and muscles when you can. For example, you might use both hands to carry a shopping bag or carry it on your forearm.

Free information is available from the Independent Living Centre SA (ILCSA) on Energy Conservation. The information may be helpful in assisting you to manage your arthritis.

Household Tasks

- Utensils with a built-up handle may be easier to grasp (for example specifically designed vegetable peelers, cutlery, cooking spatulas). Tubular foam or lightweight slip-on handles can be added to a range of items to build-up the handle (such as cutlery, hairbrushes, and toothbrushes).
- Specific kettles with an inbuilt pivoted frame or a "kettle tipper" frame for your existing kettle to sit in to allow the kettle to be tipped without having to lift it. You might also like to try bringing a small bottle/jug of water to the kettle for filling, rather than carrying a full kettle back from the sink.
- Jar openers, bottle openers and can openers, including ring-pull can openers are designed to use larger muscles and put less stress on smaller joints. Electric or battery-operated jar and can openers are also available and require minimal effort from the user.
- Ergonomic knives with angled handles are useful when cutting and slicing.
- Tap turners, silicone grips and lever-style taps can provide better grip and leverage.
- Door grippers or non-slip matting may make it easier to grasp and turn round door knobs.
- A 'pick-up reacher' is a long-handled stick with a claw at the end that enables you to pick up lightweight objects from the floor or unreachable heights.
- Plastic plug pullers help pull electric plugs out of their close-fitting sockets.

- Trolleys such as tray mobile can make moving heavy objects within the house easier.
- Key turners give better grip leverage on keys.
- Lightweight plastic, rubber and foam grips for pens and pencils aid grasp.
- Spring-action scissors require less pressure and less involvement of the thumb to operate.

Dressing

- Clothing and shoes that pull on without buttons, zips or laces, or at least have them at the front, is generally easier to manage. We can give you the suggestions on replacing some buttons, press-studs or hook-and-eye fastenings with hook-and-loop tape.
- Use bras without fastenings.
- Button hooks and zip pullers are often useful.
- A dressing stick can help you pull up underwear or pants, or help you remove them over your feet from a seated position.
- Sock and stocking aids help you reach the sock or stocking to the foot and then pull it up.
- Slippers that open-up flat make it easier to place your foot in. They close with hook-and-loop tape fastenings and are available with non-slip rubber soles.
- A long-handled shoe horn may help you put on your shoes.

Personal Care

Pill splitters, pill crushers and medicine organisers help you to get the right dose at the right time.

- An angled, long-handled brush, washing sponge or bottom-wiper can help with personal hygiene tasks, particularly if you have restricted neck or shoulder movement.

Recreation

- Lightweight, long-handled and adapted garden tools are available.
- A card holder will allow you to look at your playing cards and select without having to hold the cards in your hand.
- Book holders support a book, whilst you are in a chair or bed. Tablets or iPads may be lighter to hold than a book. The texts for a wide range of books can be downloaded from the Internet.

Resources from Arthritis SA (incorporating Osteoporosis SA)

Arthritis SA has a wide range of information sheets available about living with arthritis and how to manage symptoms.

You can contact the Arthritis SA at:

111A Welland Ave, Welland SA 5007

Phone: 83795711 or 1800 011 041 (country callers) Email: info@arthritissa.org.au

Website: www.arthritissa.org.au

Contacting the Independent Living Centre SA

The Independent Living Centre SA offers free advice on equipment and techniques to help you with everyday tasks. **Ph: 1800 445 272**

People Helping People: Catalyst Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation and the leading provider of community information in South Australia. We connect people to services and we provide free and independent information to all South Australians. For more information visit

www.catalystfoundation.com.au

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