

HEALTHWORD
Putting Health Promotion Back in Motion

February 2007

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HEALTHWORD is a monthly e-mail newsletter produced by the American Society on Aging's Live Well, Live Long project. Live Well, Live Long provides education and resources to professionals in the field of aging to help them improve health promotion and disease prevention efforts aimed at older adults. Current and past issues of this newsletter are available on the Live Well, Live Long website at <http://www.asaging.org/cdc/HealthWord.cfm>.

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IN THIS ISSUE

FEATURE

Physical activity benefits elders with arthritis

TOOLS YOU CAN USE

Health promotion sessions at the 2007 Joint Conference of the American Society on Aging and the National Council on Aging

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Health promotion education and training events around North America

FEATURE:

PREVENT -- AND TREAT -- ARTHRITIS WITH EXERCISE

By Pam Ford-Keach

According to a recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 46 million Americans, or almost one in five adults, have arthritis. The term "arthritis" encompasses more than 100 diseases and conditions affecting joints and connective tissue, all of which have a significant impact on quality of life and healthy living (read more about the CDC statistics at <http://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/intervention>).

Arthritis currently limits the activities of 19 million adults. It is the leading cause of disability in the United States and contributes to high healthcare costs across the nation. Among older Americans who report having difficulty walking or shopping, arthritis is frequently the leading cause of their mobility difficulty, and many elders experience costly treatment for disabling chronic joint symptoms.

Being overweight is strongly associated with increased risk for both the development and progression of arthritis, particularly osteoarthritis. Among adults who are obese or

overweight, the prevalence of arthritis almost doubles when compared with adults who are of a normal weight. Obese adults, in fact, are up to four times more likely to develop knee osteoarthritis than adults of normal weight. Maintaining a healthy weight may reduce the risk of developing arthritis or it may slow the progression of the disease; research has shown that weight loss -- an average of 11 pounds -- may reduce the risk of developing knee osteoarthritis by as much as 50 percent.

Having arthritis, and the pain it causes, may create a barrier to the adoption of healthy lifestyle behaviors. Yet physical activity benefits people with arthritis in many ways. Research has shown that exercise reduces joint pain, improves function, and delays disability. The physical activity recommendation for people with arthritis is 30 minutes of moderate exercise at least three times per week. Engaging in physical activity in 10-minute intervals is a great way to start.

Exercise for People With Arthritis

People with arthritis need specific guidance on appropriate types of exercises as well as the duration and frequency of physical activity. They should be informed that while pain may increase during and immediately following physical activity, exercise can enhance overall pain management. Certain land-based exercise and water exercise classes are safe for people with arthritis. Examples:

--> Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program

<http://www.arthritis.org/afep1.asp>

In this community-based recreational exercise program (formerly known as People with Arthritis Can Exercise, or PACE) developed by the Arthritis Foundation, trained instructors cover a variety of range-of-motion and endurance-building activities, relaxation techniques, and health education topics. All of the exercises can be modified to meet participant needs. Classes typically meet two or three times per week.

Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program

<http://www.arthritis.org/events/getinvolved/programsservices/aquaticprogram.asp>

The foundation also created this water exercise program for people with arthritis and related conditions. Classes, conducted by a trained instructor, include joint range-of-motion exercises, stretching, breathing, and light-aerobic activities. The classes typically meet two or three times per week for one hour.

EnhanceFitness (formerly Lifetime Fitness)

<http://www.projectenhance.org/pro/fitness.html>

EnhanceFitness is an evidence-based, community-delivered exercise program proven to increase strength, boost activity levels, and elevate mood. Certified instructors offer a program that focuses on stretching, flexibility, balance, low-impact aerobics, and strength-training exercises.

Self-Management

In addition, Kate Lorig of Stanford University, working with the Arthritis Foundation, has developed a self-management program for people with arthritis. The Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Course (AFSHC) helps people learn and practice the different skills needed to build an individualized self-management program and gain the confidence to carry it out. The six-week course consists of weekly two-hour sessions guided by two trained instructors who follow a detailed protocol. Participants have reported a 20 percent decrease in pain and a 40 percent decrease in physician visits, even four years after participation in the course.

Early diagnosis and appropriate management of arthritis, including regular exercise and self-management activities, can help people with arthritis decrease pain, improve function, stay productive, and lower healthcare costs. Key self-management activities include developing the skills and confidence to manage arthritis on a day-to-day basis; being active; watching one's weight; seeing a doctor regularly; and protecting one's joints.

Author note: Pam Ford-Keach is chief of the California Department of Health Services' California Arthritis Partnership Program.

TOOLS YOU CAN USE:

HEALTH PROMOTION SESSIONS AT THE 2007 JOINT CONFERENCE

The 2007 ASA-NCOA Joint Conference, which takes place March 7-10 in Chicago, offers professionals a wide selection of sessions on health promotion and older adults. Topics include medication adherence, physical activity, and cognitive health. The following is a sampling of sessions:

--> Adult MEducation: Improving Medication Adherence in Older Adults

Janice L. Feinberg will host this program exchange to provide information on factors that influence medication adherence and resources to improve it. The session corresponds with the latest module, by the same title, on ASA's Live Well, Live Long website (<http://www.asaging.org/cdc>).

--> Where Ignorance Is Not Bliss! Medications and Older Adults Across Diverse Populations

Presenter Moira Fordyce will explore the reasons for medication-related problems in older adults and will describe the elders most at risk. The basic principles of safe prescribing for older adults will be explored as well as the importance of frequent medication review.

--> Fit and Strong! Evidence-Based Physical Activity/Behavior Change Program for Seniors With Arthritis

In this preconference intensive (which takes place Tues., March 6), Pankaja Desai, Gail Huber, Susan Hughes, and Rachel Seymour will describe "Fit and Strong!," a program for behavior change for older adults with lower-extremity osteoarthritis. Presenters will

describe the components of the program, discuss the evidence regarding its effectiveness, and review instructor training materials and procedures.

--> Promoting Increased Physical Activity Among Older Adults: Why and How?

The Fitness Initiative for Senior Health is an evidence-based fitness program that engages community-dwelling low- and moderate-income older adults of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds. Pamela Elfenbein will offer a program description, research findings, and information on how to start a program in your area.

--> Brain Health: Exploring the Possibilities

In this session, Rosemary Falvey and Caroline Fox will promote basic understanding of brain structure and function, and help you plan a lifestyle that optimizes brain health into old age.

--> The Aging Brain: Lifelong Learning Through the Creative Arts

This session brings Gene Cohen, Kali Lightfoot, Sara Peller, Susan Perlstein, and Andrea Sherman together to explore the impact of creative arts programs on older adults, including cutting-edge research and best-practice examples. The panelists will discuss the vital role of the arts as a lifelong process.

For more information about these health-promotion sessions or to review the full list of sessions at the 2007 ASA-NCOA Joint Conference, visit

<http://www.agingconference.org>.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Event: 21st Annual Bryan Alzheimer's Disease Research Center Conference

Date: March 1-2, 2007

Location: Duke University, Durham, N.C.

This conference, open to professionals and members of the public alike, will explore the hottest leads created by combining population studies with genetic and clinic-based research. See the Duke Bryan Memory Disorders Clinic team "in action" and attend new workshops on creative approaches in caring for people with dementia. To read the full conference program, visit <http://www.geri.duke.edu/service/dfsp/event.htm>.

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Event: 2007 Joint Conference of the American Society on Aging and the National Council on Aging

Dates: March 7-10, 2007

Location: Chicago

The theme of this year's conference is "Lets Rethink Aging." This not-to-be-missed conference will feature more than 900 sessions covering a diverse range of topics in aging. It will showcase innovative programs, foster policy discussion and advocacy, and share cutting-edge research findings. For more information, visit <http://www.agingconference.org>.

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Event: Aging and HIV/AIDS in the 21st Century
Dates: March 8-10, 2007
Location: Washington D.C.

The National Association of HIV Over Fifty's seventh national conference covers such topics as the aging immune system, women's issues, GLBTQ community issues, HIV care and aging, safer sex after 50, health disparities, and nutrition. For more information, visit <http://www.hivoverfifty.org/>.

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Call for Nominations: 2007 Archstone Award for Excellence in Program Innovation
Deadline: Postmarked by Apr. 1, 2007

The Gerontological Health Section of the American Public Health Association is currently accepting nominations for the 2007 Archstone Award for Excellence in Program Innovation, which recognizes best-practice models in the field of health and aging. Programs that effectively link academic theory to applied practice in the field of public health and aging are eligible for nomination. For more information, visit http://www.archstone.org/press_release2296/press_release_show.htm?doc_id=449477.

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For more educational offerings in the field of aging, visit the searchable "Events in Aging" calendar on the ASA website: <http://www.asaging.org/calendar>.

Have an event related to health promotion and aging that you would like to tell your colleagues about? Please submit your event, call for papers, or grant announcements to Betsy Dorsett at betsyd@asaging.org. Include the title, organization, date and time, location, contact information, and a short description of the event.

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