

MedFit Global Conference
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Arthritis Exercise: Mobility for Life

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Why are you so clumsy?



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**“Once you stop moving,
it’s ALL over.”**

-Dr. El-Kadi



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Objectives:

Arthritis is a leading cause of activity limitations, disability, and chronic pain that affects millions of people worldwide. In this session, you will learn practical movement patterns to safely and effectively improve joint mobility and improve quality of life.



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What is Arthritis?

Osteoarthritis

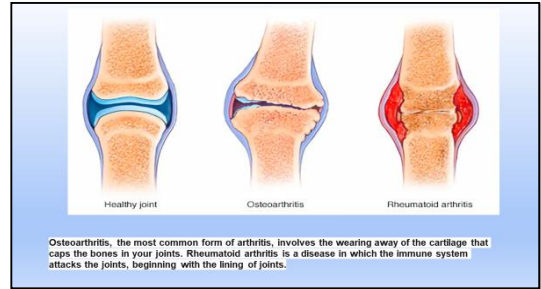
The most common form of arthritis due to wear and tear, overuse, or past injury.

Rheumatoid Arthritis, Lupus, Juvenile Arthritis, Fibromyalgia, Gout, Psoriatic Arthritis, Ankylosing Spondylitis & Septic Arthritis

These are autoimmune diseases that occur when the immune system protecting you from foreign invaders like bacteria and viruses, your body attacks itself. This results in inflammation, particularly in the joints for those with RA, and may also affect organs like the heart, lungs, and eyes.



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What I have learned...

- Sedentary Lifestyles
- No Time
- No Extra Money/Funds
- Back Pain
- Poor Posture
- Obesity
- Co-morbidities
- Multiple Pain Medications/Medicines
- Chronic Physical Pain
- Defensive Attitudes



Poor Mental Health/Mindset



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Daily life...



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ARTHRITIS EXERCISE: Debunk the Myths!



- Exercise causes increases in inflammation and pain.
- Exercise is a risk to the heart and lungs.
- Lifting weights is detrimental.
- High impact activities should be avoided.
- Exercise should be limited in frequency, duration, and intensity.



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How does exercise help?

Muscles

- » **Increased Strength:** Regular resistance or functional movement training helps maintain and build muscle strength, which is especially important to support arthritic joints.
- » **Reduced Stiffness:** Movement improves circulation and helps prevent muscles from tightening or atrophying, which can lead to increased joint strain.
- » **Better Endurance:** Low-impact cardio (like walking, cycling, or water aerobics) improves muscular endurance, making daily tasks less tiring.



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How does exercise help?



Joints

- » **Enhanced Range of Motion:** Gentle, consistent movement helps lubricate joints with synovial fluid, reducing stiffness and improving flexibility.
- » **Decreased Joint Pain:** Strengthening surrounding muscles helps offload pressure from inflamed joints, which can reduce pain and prevent further degeneration.
- » **Slower Disease Progression:** Exercise can help maintain cartilage health and minimize structural deterioration in the joint, especially in early-stage arthritis.



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How does exercise help?



Lungs

- » **Improved Oxygen Utilization:** Cardiovascular exercise enhances your body's ability to deliver and use oxygen efficiently, which supports stamina and energy.
- » **Decreased Breathlessness:** Over time, exercise improves lung capacity and breathing control—important for individuals who experience fatigue or shortness of breath due to inactivity or inflammation.



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How does exercise help?



Organs (Heart, Brain, Gut, etc.)

- » **Heart Health:** Arthritis increases cardiovascular disease risk; exercise helps counter that by lowering blood pressure, improving cholesterol levels, and strengthening the heart.
- » **Brain Function:** Movement boosts mood-regulating chemicals like serotonin and endorphins while reducing inflammation-related cognitive decline.
- » **Digestive Support:** Physical activity stimulates the digestive system, which can improve gut motility and reduce constipation (common with medications).
- » **Immune Regulation:** Moderate exercise helps modulate immune function and reduce chronic systemic inflammation—key in autoimmune forms of arthritis (like RA or lupus).



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How does exercise help?



Mental & Emotional Benefits

- » Reduces anxiety and depression associated with chronic pain
- » Increases confidence and independence
- » Improves sleep and energy levels
- » Enhances overall quality of life!



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Where do I start?

The Head-to-Toe Joint Mobility Assessment

- » **Set the Tone**
 - Introductions Matter “How do you greet your clients?”
- » **Get Your Mind Right:**
 - Breathe & Be Present
- » **Start with the Cervical Spine and Move Down**
- » **Identify & Speak to Each Joint**
- » **Identify & Speak to Each Muscle Group**
- » **Look, Listen, & Ask Questions**



NOW YOU CAN CREATE THE WORKOUT!

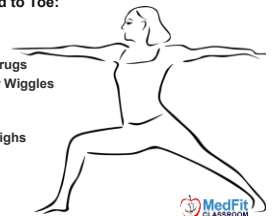


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What is a range-of-motion exercise routine?

Daily Range-Of-Motion Exercise From Head to Toe:

- Deep Breaths
- Head/Neck Circles (Hold each side)
- Shoulder Rolls Forward/Backwards and Shrugs
- Bicep Curls, Grip Strength Fists and Finger Wiggles
- Hip Circles/Hinges
- Bear Hugs to Chest Openers
- Shallow Squats Sliding Hands Up/Down Thighs
- Ankle Rolls, Heel Raises, Toe Wiggles
- Deep Breaths



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AMRAPs vs. REP COUNTS

AMRAPs: As Many Reps As Possible in a Given Time
Vs.

REP COUNTS: Providing a Certain Number of Reps

- » There is **NO CORRECT ANSWER!**
- » Each day may be different (inflammation, pain, mindset, etc...)
- » Pre-choreographed/Pre-Planned Workouts are **NOT** the answer!
- » Individualized Plans/Workouts are **KEY**
 - Weights a **MUST!**
 - Functional Mobility Movements a **MUST**
 - Limitations are Realized, **NOT ASSUMED!**



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General Exercise Guidelines (FITT Principle)

Type	Frequency	Intensity	Duration
Aerobic	3–5 days/week	40–85% HRR	Start at 10–15 min, build to 30–45 min
Resistance	2–3 days/week	30–80% 1RM	1–3 sets of 8–10 exercises
Flexibility	Most days	Stretch to point of tension	2–4 sets/muscle, 10–30 seconds each



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REIMAGINE EXERCISE GOALS & SESSIONS

1. The Overall Purpose (Define Success)
2. Assessments (Daily vs. Weekly vs. Monthly)
3. Increasing Weights
4. Adding Reps
5. Choosing Modalities (When? What?)
6. Session Design/Flow (Start/End)
7. Mental Health Check-ins
8. Motivating Factors



THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX



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EVERY WORKOUT SHOULD INCLUDE:

1. A Mental Health Check-in!
2. A Head-to-Toe Mobility Assessment!
3. Movements That Mimic Real-Life!
4. Explanations of the Exercises!
5. Strength, Flexibility, Balance, and an Increase Cardiovascular Response/Heart rate
6. Cooldown/Gentle Stretching
7. Encouragement, Celebratory Ritual, and Positive Affirmation
8. Homework: What to do on your own!
9. Reminder/Book Next Session or Class



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EVERY WORKOUT MUST INCLUDE:**Foundational Patterns:**

1. Squat
2. Hinge
3. Lunge
4. Push
5. Pull
6. Carry

**Each Movement Is Clearly Defined to Promote:**

1. Range of Motion
2. Balance, Stability and Flexibility
3. Endurance, Strength or Agility
4. Breath and Mindfulness



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SAMPLE 30 MIN SESSION

Client Notes: Female/Age 65--Osteoarthritis Present in Shoulder Joints, Hips, and Knees. Daily Discomfort Moving Joints, Limited Joint Mobility, Weakness in Surrounding Muscle Groups

1. A Mental Health Check-in! (3 min)
2. A Head-to-Toe Mobility Assessment! (5-6 min)
3. Walking & Static High Knees: Front/side: incorporate arms (4 min)
4. Bicep Curls w/5LB Hand Weights 30 sec AMRAP, 30 sec rest 4x (2 min)
5. Lateral Walks 2-2 (light band on thighs) 30 sec AMRAP, 30 sec rest 4x (2 min)
6. Front to Side Raise (1 or 2 arms) 2-3Lb Weights (AMRAP as above 4x) (2 min)
7. Squat to Heel Raises (Bodyweight) AMRAP as above 5x (4 min)
8. Seated: Hold TRX or Strap to Assist (Lay Down/to Sit up position) AMRAP 3x (4 min)
9. Guided Stretching/Breaths/Daily Affirmations/Assign Homework (4 min)



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Takeaway Message

Fitness professionals are in a powerful position to **positively impact the lives of clients and survivors with chronic illnesses.**

With the right knowledge and compassion, you can help clients feel stronger, healthier, and more hopeful — one workout at a time.

Dr. Laskowski, Mayo Clinic
 "Exercise for Cancer Patients" (8 Minutes)
[Bing Videos](#)
<https://youtu.be/rMG1kYw6PQ>



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 What if Your Fears Were the Key to Your Dreams?



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