

Tips to Reduce Pain and Make Activities Easier to Do

Legs and Feet

How to Protect your Joints

Respect Pain

- Pain occurring with or after activity is a warning sign. The activity may be too stressful or have been done for too long
- Get to know when you will have less pain and work within that time
 - Change how you do a task
 - Change how long you do an activity

Pace Yourself – Balance Activity and Rest

- Take short breaks often while you are doing an activity
- Use a timer to remind yourself to take a break. Rest your hips and knees by sitting or lying down to get the weight off your joints

Plan Your Activities

- Plan to avoid too much walking and build in rest stops along the way
- Reduce the number of times you go up and down stairs. A bag or basket kept near the stairs can be used to carry items and save trips up and down

Avoid Activities with Weight Bearing through the Hips and Knees when they are Bent

- Avoid low furniture, kneeling, or sitting on the bottom of the tub.
- Stair climbing is not a good exercise when you have arthritis. If you have to use stairs, always use the handrail and take one step at a time. Go up the stairs leading with your stronger leg and come down the stairs leading with the leg that hurts the most.

Have a Seat

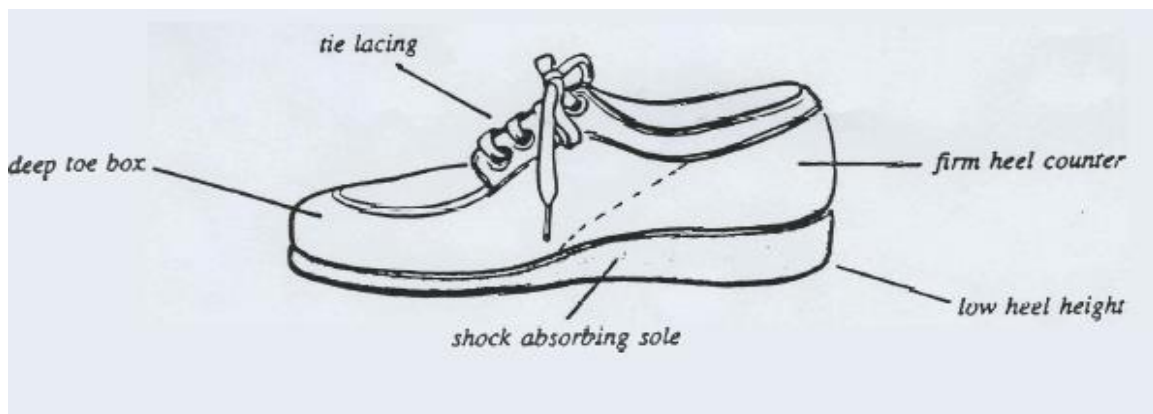
- Sit to do activities such as preparing food, gardening or ironing
- Sit in a chair with arms whenever possible
- Get off a chair with good body mechanics – move to the edge of the seat, put one foot slightly in front of the other and push up with both your legs and arms

Use a High Seat

- Use a firm cushion to raise the height of chairs or sofas. Use a footrest to support your feet and legs
- Use a raised toilet seat or higher toilet. Use a grab rail by the toilet to help get up. Do not use the toilet paper holder or towel rack as a grab rail.

Wear Supportive Shoes

- Wearing shoes that support and cushion your feet can make walking more comfortable, make you feel safer and reduce the risk of falling.
- A supportive shoe has:
 - Good arch support
 - Laces or Velcro to keep your feet secure in the shoe
 - A wide and deep area for the toes – toes should not be squeezed
 - Firm support around the heel
 - Non slip sole, thick enough to provide some cushioning
 - 3/4 " to 1 " heel



Avoid Carrying Heavy Loads

- Carrying heavy things puts more forces through your legs and feet. Use a wheeled cart for groceries and other loads

Get Comfortable in Bed

- Use a medium firm mattress with a comfort topper – egg crate or memory foam, sheepskin
- Lay on your side with a pillow between your knees to reduce twisting of your back and hip joints
- When lying on your back, do not put a pillow under your knees as your knees may get very stiff in the bent position
- Try a pillow at the end of the bed to raise the bedding off painful feet
- A duvet or lightweight bedding can reduce pressure on your joints and the bed will be easier to make

Keep a Healthy Weight

- Extra body weight puts more stress on the joints in your legs and feet. By losing 5 pounds you can decrease 25 pounds of pressure on your knees with each step
- A well balanced diet and regular exercise will help keep a healthy weight.
For more information, attend the “Healthy Eating and Weight Management” classes

TAKE HOME MESSAGES

Balance activities and rest – take regular breaks

Avoid too much weight bearing

Wear supportive shoes

Keep a healthy weight

Listen to your body