

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Member blog – Musculoskeletal health

The following health and wellbeing blog has been prepared by TAL for use by partner superannuation funds for their members. It is available to use in white-label format for communications and is designed to provide information for members on positive ways to support their physical health.

-BLOG-

5 tips for living well with arthritis

Taking a proactive approach to understanding your condition and the steps you can take to alleviate symptoms can greatly contribute to living well with arthritis. Your doctor can help you to develop a plan to manage your condition and connect you with a support network. If you'd like to know more, our life insurance partner [TAL](#), has provided some useful guidance on the steps you can take to help manage your condition.

In Australia, 1 in 6 people have arthritis. Many people think that arthritis occurs in older people, however two out of three people with arthritis are between 15 and 60 years old¹.

Arthritis is the name for a group of conditions that affect the joints. It can affect people in different ways, but the most common symptoms are pain, swelling and stiffness of joints. There are many different types of arthritis and some forms can involve other parts of your body too.

Because arthritis affects people in different ways, it's important to work with your healthcare team to find treatments that suit you. The good news is that there are things you can do to live well with arthritis.

1. Focus on self-care

A focus on self-care should be an integral part of daily life. It involves taking responsibility for your own health and wellbeing with support from those involved in your care. It includes what you do every day to stay fit and maintain your best possible state of physical and mental health and prevent illness or accidents.

2. Be aware of the warning signs

Thanks to early treatment, inflammation due to arthritis affecting other parts of the body is becoming less common. However, if left untreated arthritis can cause complications. It's important to be aware of these potential complications and speak with your doctor or rheumatologist if your symptoms change.

3. Stay active

Exercising regularly can help relieve stress, keep your joints mobile and strengthen the muscles supporting your joints. Exercise can also help you lose weight if you're overweight, which can put extra strain on your joints.

However, it's important to strike a balance between rest and exercise. Rest will make inflamed joints feel more comfortable, but without movement your joints will stiffen and your muscles will become

weaker. It's important to find out the best activities and the right balance for you. A physiotherapist or exercise physiologist will be able to help.

4. Eat well

There is very little evidence that particular foods are good or bad for people with arthritis and there is certainly no diet proven to 'cure' it. Eating a balanced diet that is low in saturated fat, sugar and salt, but high in fruit, vegetables and cereals is good for most people. This can help you lose weight (if required), which may reduce the strain on your joints.

5. Manage stress

Living with the pain, stiffness and fatigue of arthritis, as well as side effects of your medication, can be stressful. Share your thoughts and feelings with others when opportunities arise. When you share your concerns or feelings with another person, it can help to relieve stress. But it's important that the person you talk to is someone that you trust and who you feel can understand and validate your thoughts and feelings whether it's a friend, family member or healthcare professional.

You can find more information on living well with arthritis on the [Arthritis Australia](#) website.

References

[Arthritis Australia](#)

Important information

The health information contained in this document is not a substitute for advice from a qualified medical or other health professional. It is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any health problem. Always consult your medical practitioner or other health professional in relation to any medical issue or concern, before changing your diet, starting an exercise program, or taking medication or supplements of any kind. While all care has been taken to ensure that the information provided is accurate and complete at the date of publication, neither TAL nor its employees accept liability for any loss or damage caused as a result of reliance on the information.

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