

Providing

reliable and up to date information to improve the understanding of arthritis and osteoporosis

Promoting

healthy lifestyles and self-management to optimise health outcomes

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jointNTed **Arthritis & Osteoporosis NT**

February-March 2025

Palmerston Support Group Christmas Party

A very enjoyable time was had by all at the group's Christmas Party - the last meeting for 2025. Thanks to convener Lyn for organising such a lovely event. The group looks forward to another year of support, good company, and friendship



The group meets on the fourth Friday of the month at the Brennan electoral office at 10:00 am. There is usually a speaker at each meeting, following a short session of chair-based exercises. Guest speakers are invited according to the interests of the group - and a wide range of topics is covered over the year .

**This group is open to all AONT members.
You are welcome to just turn up!**

Welcome to new and returning members



As always, one of AONT's goals for the year is to provide six issues of interesting and informative newsletters. Members are welcome to contact the office with suggestions for features and articles.



Thanks to staff at the Karama electorate office for assistance with printing this newsletter.

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Arthritis & Osteoporosis NT



Brian O'Gallagher MLA
Member for Karama
Visible, Accessible, Serving our Community

Benefits of Tracking Your Arthritis Pain and Progress

From: *The Arthritis Movement November 2024*

<https://www.arthritis.org.au/arthritis/arthritis-insights/positive-health-habits/benefits-of-tracking-your-arthritis-pain-and-progress/>

Managing arthritis is a journey that involves much more than just treating physical symptoms. For many people with arthritis, monitoring pain levels and tracking progress can be incredibly beneficial in understanding how the condition fluctuates and identifying what works best for them leading to informed decisions regarding their treatment.



Reasons to Track Your Arthritis Pain:

1. Identify Triggers

Pain and flare-ups can be influenced by numerous factors, including certain activities, stress, or weather changes. Tracking helps you identify these triggers and make adjustments to avoid or manage them better.

2. Recognising Patterns

You might notice that your pain tends to increase after certain activities or that stiffness is worse in the mornings. You'll also be able to see if particular behaviours (for example exercise and diet), or particular activities (for example, social outings) can help reduce your symptoms.

3. Monitoring Medication Effectiveness

Tracking your pain levels can help you assess the effectiveness of medications. You'll be able to see if certain medications reduce your symptoms or if you need to speak with your healthcare provider about adjustments.

4. Improving Communication with Healthcare Providers:

Detailed records of your symptoms can provide invaluable information to your doctor and can lead to more productive conversations about treatment options, potential changes and overall management strategies.

Benefits of Tracking Your Progress

1. Motivation and Positive Reinforcement

Living with arthritis can feel challenging, but keeping track of improvements - no matter how small - can be incredibly motivating.

2. Setting Realistic Goals

Tracking progress allows you to set achievable realistic goals for yourself. Instead of expecting major improvements overnight, you can set smaller, specific goals, such as increasing the range of motion in your wrists, improving grip strength, or managing morning stiffness more effectively.



3. Celebrating Achievements

Tracking progress provides opportunities to celebrate small but meaningful achievements and stay positive and committed. Recognising these milestones helps you stay positive, focused and committed to your self-care routines.

4. Identifying Effective Therapies and Exercises

As you try different therapies, exercises, or lifestyle changes, tracking your progress allows you to assess what is working for you. This helps you personalise your arthritis management plan.

Tips for Tracking Your Arthritis Pain & Progress

1. Use a Pain Journal

In your journal record details like the intensity and location of your pain, stiffness, swelling, and any other symptoms you're experiencing.

Use a scale (like 1-10) to rate pain intensity and note any factors that may have influenced your symptoms (e.g., weather, stress, specific activities).

2. Track Daily Activities

Record your daily activities, including exercise, diet, and any notable physical tasks (such as cleaning or gardening) and pain levels to help you understand which activities might be causing flare-ups or pain relief.

3. Record Your Medications and Therapies

Keep track of any medications, supplements, or therapies you're using, including the dosage, frequency and timing. You may be able to see trends in how effective these treatments are over time.

4. Monitor Physical Progress

In addition to pain, track other physical changes, such as improved range of motion, strength, or flexibility.

5. Use Technology to Help

Using apps on your phone may appeal to some readers.

6. Include Emotional Health

Tracking your mood, stress levels, and sleep patterns can help you understand how arthritis is affecting your overall quality of life. Some people find that increased stress and anxiety leads to more intense pain.

7. Review Your Records Regularly

Make it a habit to review your journal or app records regularly to look for patterns. Identify any adjustments you may want to discuss with your doctor or specialist.

How Tracking Can Lead to Better Arthritis Management

Living with arthritis can be challenging, but keeping track of your pain and progress can be a game-changer. Not only does it help you monitor your condition and recognise patterns, but it also gives you a sense of control over your health.



Exercises for the Back

Caution!

If these exercises are new to you, introduce them gradually. Be patient and try just one or two at a time, perhaps doing fewer repetitions.

Stomach tone

Lie on your front with your arms by your side, head on one side. Pull in your stomach muscles, centred around your belly button. Hold for 5 seconds.

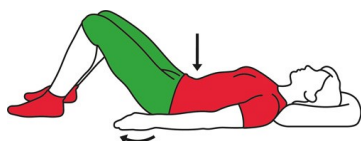
Repeat three times. Build up to 10 seconds and repeat during the day, while walking or standing. As with all of these exercises, keep breathing normally during this exercise!



Pelvic tilt

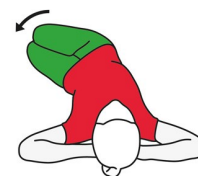
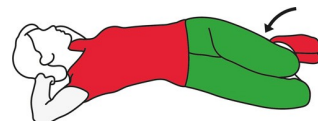
Lie down with your knees bent. Tighten your stomach muscles, flattening your back against the floor. Hold for 5 seconds.

Repeat 5 times.



Knee rolls

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet together. Roll your knees to one side, keeping your shoulders flat on the bed or floor, and hold for 10 seconds. Roll your knees back to the starting position, and then over to the other side and repeat. Do this exercise three times on each side.



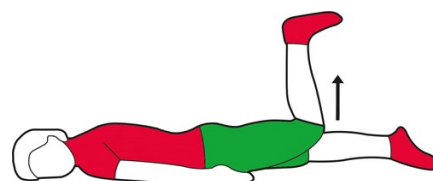
Knees to chest

Lie on your back, with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor or bed. Bring one knee up and use your hands to pull it gently towards your chest. Hold the leg in position for 5 seconds, and then relax. Repeat this exercise with the other knee. Do the exercise 5 times on each side.



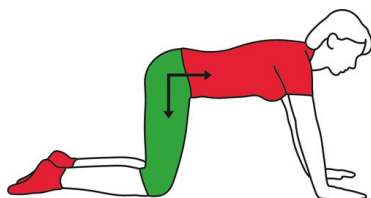
Buttock tone

Lie on your front and bend one leg up behind you. Lift your bent knee just off the floor. Hold for up to 8 seconds. Repeat 5 times each side.



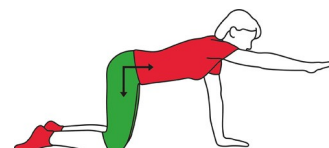
Deep stomach muscle tone

Kneel on all fours with a small curve in your lower back. Let your stomach relax completely. Pull the lower part of your stomach upwards so that you lift your back (without arching it) away from the floor. Hold for 10 seconds. Keep breathing! Repeat 10 times.



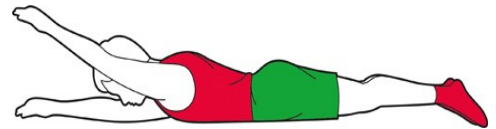
Back stabiliser

Kneel on all fours with your back straight. Tighten your stomach. Keeping your back in this position, raise one arm in front of you and hold for 10 seconds. Try to keep your pelvis level and don't rotate your body. Repeat 10 times each side. To progress, try lifting one leg behind you instead of raising your arm.



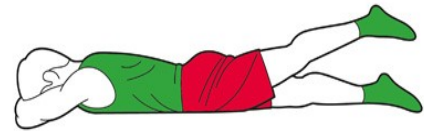
Arm raise

Lie on your stomach with your back in a neutral position. Tense the muscles in your lower stomach and raise one arm upwards. Hold this position for 5 seconds, and then relax your arm. Repeat this exercise 10 times with each arm.



Leg raise

Lie face down, though you might want to turn your head to one side if this is more comfortable. Tighten your stomach and buttock muscles to lift one leg slightly off the floor, while keeping your hips flat on the ground. Hold this position for 5 to 10 seconds and repeat 3 times.



These exercises and many more can be found on the website of Versus Arthritis, the UK equivalent of Arthritis Australia:

<https://versusarthritis.org/about-arthritis/exercising-with-arthritis>

Community Engagement

“Welcome to the Top End” Expo hosted by Defence Member and Family Support

Along with many other organisations (sport, social, health etc), AONT again had an information stand at this annual event, to welcome new Defence personnel and families.



The focus of our stand was Healthy Bones. Mr Skeleton had pride of place at the front of our display, providing a good talking point, both with adults and children.

The activities at the front of our stand caught the eye of young children, with a dozen or so participating. A range of materials was available, some aimed at adults, and some for the children, covering both bone health and joint health.



Spices may be Anti-inflammatory!

Information sourced from the Arthritis society Canada,
authored by Lalitha Taylor, registered dietitian
<https://arthritis.ca/living-well/2022/4-best-spices-for-arthritis>

Spices not only increase the flavour and aroma of the foods we eat, they may also lessen symptoms of arthritis by inhibiting specific pathways that can lead to inflammation. Try incorporating these savory, anti-inflammatory spices in your recipes.

Garlic

Garlic has traditionally been used as an antidote for disease. It belongs to the genus allium and contains an anti-inflammatory compound. Allium vegetables include garlic, onion leeks, chives and scallions.

A long-term study showed that women whose diets were rich in allium vegetables, such as garlic, had lower levels of osteoarthritis. Other studies have shown its effect on reducing inflammation, pain and fatigue associated with rheumatoid arthritis.



How to use it: Garlic can be consumed either raw or cooked. In its raw form, garlic is more pungent, spicy and earthy. Peel and grate fresh garlic over cooked vegetables, soup, salad, pasta or a couple slices of toast. To combat "garlic breath," consume a few drops of freshly squeezed lemon or brush your teeth. Cooked garlic has a mild nutty taste. Add garlic to stews, pasta, mashed potatoes, soup and roasted vegetables.

Tip: Consider roasted garlic and olive oil as a spread on bread instead of butter.

Ginger

Ginger has been used as folk medicine for centuries. Gingerol is the main anti-inflammatory compound in ginger. It functions similarly to drugs used to treat joint pain and inflammation. Some studies have linked ginger to decreased joint pain and disability in people with osteoarthritis.



How to use it: Ginger has an unmistakable sharp and aromatic flavour. It elevates any dish when added. The easiest way to use ginger is to freeze the ginger root. This allows you to grate the ginger easily into a variety of dishes including stews, rice, fruit sauces, muffins and more.

Cinnamon

Once so valuable and rare, cinnamon was often given as gifts to kings. Cinnamon contains compounds which have been associated with reducing joint pain. Research has shown some promising results with cinnamon supplementation in reducing inflammation and oxidative stress. However more studies are needed to fully determine the effectiveness of cinnamon and its impact on inflammation. This spice can be generously used to flavour food.



Turmeric

Best known for its vibrant rich yellow colour, turmeric is a spice commonly used in Indian cuisine. It has a long history of being used as medicine in Chinese and Indian cultures as well. Turmeric contains a compound known as curcumin. This compound is associated with lowering inflammation and easing osteoarthritis pain.



How to use it: One study suggested curcumin supplementation was almost as effective as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) in reducing osteoarthritis pain. Another study showed curcumin played a role in preventing bone breakdown in people with rheumatoid arthritis. Reports show that curcumin should be paired alongside black pepper. The active compound in pepper, piperine, can increase the absorption of curcumin.

Tip: Whisk turmeric and black pepper into your favourite salad dressing and drizzle onto your roasted vegetables or salad.

Strength in age: how exercise boosts independence for older Australians

Quotes from Heath Jones, exercise Scientist and CEO / Founder of “Active & Ageless over-50s” Fitness studios in Sydney.

“While getting older is inevitable, being unfit and unhealthy in our later years is not. We have more control over how we age than we think we do.”

“What we do - and don’t do - to our bodies matters. Three key things impact how we age: what we eat, how we care for our mental health, and how (and how much) we exercise every day.”

How does strength training benefit older adults?

“Bodyweight, weight, or resistance band exercises help combat age-related muscle loss (sarcopenia) by improving muscle mass, bone health, load-bearing ability and grip strength. In turn, these benefits reduce the risk of falls, heart disease and metabolic conditions.”

Is it harder to build strength as we age?

“Our bodies change as we age. We lose muscle mass, strength, stamina and coordination. Improving fitness becomes more challenging, especially if we haven’t exercised much before. Older adults may also deal with chronic conditions or pain from old injuries.”

“***But here’s the thing:*** our bodies are tougher and more capable than we think - and regular movement can still build strength and mobility.”

“There may be limitations on what you can do, but physically, ***we are more resilient than we realise.***”

“***When we don’t exercise enough,*** our muscles aren’t doing the jobs they were designed for, and ***this puts extra stress on our joints.*** With a regular exercise routine, many of these challenges improve or even disappear”

**The Arthritis
Foundation of the
Northern Territory Inc.**
Trading as
**Arthritis &
Osteoporosis NT**
ABN 67 099 326 608

Co-Patrons
His Honour
Professor the Honourable
Hugh Heggie PSM
Administrator of the NT
and Ms Ruth Jones

Vice Patron
The Honourable Vicki
O'Halloran AM CVO

Find us at
Shop 18 Rapid Creek
Business Village,
48 Trower Rd Millner
www.aont.org.au
[facebook.com/
arthritis.osteoporosis.nt](https://facebook.com/arthritis.osteoporosis.nt)

Contact us
Freecall: 1800 011 041
(08) 8948 5232
PO Box 452,
Nightcliff 0814
info@aont.org.au

We are open
9:30am – 2:00pm
Monday to Thursday
(excluding Public Holidays)

Staff
Administrative Assistant
Deirdre Moldenhauer

Accounts
Natalie Valastro

Board
President
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What We Do

Our work includes:

- Responding to walk in and telephone enquiries
- Providing personalised information packs in response to enquiries
- Hosting education sessions: “What a Pain!” and “Taking the first step”. Call the office on 8948 5232 for more details
- Providing information stands at a range of forums throughout the year
- Presentations to community groups
- Keeping in touch with other community health organisations and the services they provide
- Delivering bulk materials on request to a range of health services
- Producing this newsletter six times a year
- Liaising with Arthritis Australia, interstate arthritis affiliates and Healthy Bones Australia
- Making applications for various small grants to assist with special projects

**Arthritis &
Osteoporosis NT**
www.aont.org.au



Get Active in Palmerston, February & March

Free classes for the Palmerston Community

Cardio Tennis	Mondays:	6:00 pm
Healthy Living NT Seniors	Wednesdays:	8:45 am
Water Walking Group	Wednesdays:	9:30am
Gym 4 Growth & Development (Little tots with their parents / carers)	Thursdays:	9:30 am
Pilates	Fridays:	12:00 pm
Yoga	Saturdays:	10:00am

For more info, call Palmerston Council on 8935 9922
or check out <https://palmerston.nt.gov.au/getactivepalmerston>.

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