

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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joinNTed

Arthritis & Osteoporosis NT

June–July 2025

Info sessions - free for members!

“Taking the first step:

help to get yourself moving”

♦ **Friday 18th July** **10:00 am to 12:00 pm**

A two hour info session to encourage those with arthritis and/or other chronic conditions to make physical activity a part of every day life, and learn about the many local options.

Self-management of chronic pain

♦ **Friday 15th August** **9:30 am to 1:00 pm**

“What a Pain!” workshops provide participants with the opportunity to listen and learn, talk and share. The facilitators follow a set agenda, which includes a slide show as well as a morning tea break. Participants receive booklets and other relevant materials to take home.

Understanding and managing arthritis and osteoporosis - NEW session

♦ **Friday 19th September** **10:00 am to 11:30 am**

This session was presented for the first time in Alice Springs (see page 4 article) and was very well received.

For all sessions bookings are essential.

Please call the office on 8948 5232 (Monday to Thursday 9:30am to 2:00pm) for all enquiries and bookings.

All these sessions are also open to the general public at a cost of \$5 per session. Please pass the word around.



Grateful thanks to the office of Justine Davis,
Member for Johnston, for printing this newsletter.

Rise and Shine:

How to Beat Morning Stiffness and Boost Mobility

An extract from **Arthritis & Osteoporosis WA: e-news May 2025**

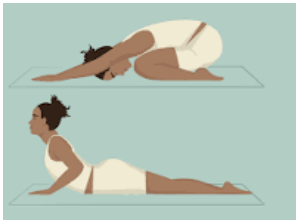
<https://www.arthritiswa.org.au/2023/10/19/beat-morning-stiffness/>

Waking up feeling stiff and achy can put a damper on the start of your day. While common beliefs may lead us to blame a poor mattress or a restless night's sleep, it's essential to consider the possibility of an underlying medical condition. Morning stiffness is a prevalent concern for many individuals, especially those with musculoskeletal conditions, and it demands a holistic approach for effective management. This article explores various factors contributing to morning stiffness and offers a fresh perspective.

Understanding Morning Stiffness

Morning stiffness can arise from various causes, ranging from inflammatory arthritis to the wear and tear of joints over time. Inflammatory forms of arthritis, such as rheumatoid arthritis (RA), psoriatic arthritis (PsA), and ankylosing spondylitis (AS), trigger morning stiffness due to inflammation in the joints. Conversely, aging and osteoarthritis (OA) lead to joint stiffness as cartilage dries out and the production of synovial fluid diminishes, reducing joint lubrication.

Stretching and Movement



Gentle stretching exercises in the morning can do wonders for loosening stiff joints and warming up muscles. This can be done in bed or by getting up and moving around. By methodically working through all stiff joints and taking them through their full range of motion, you may find yourself feeling more limber and ready to face the day.

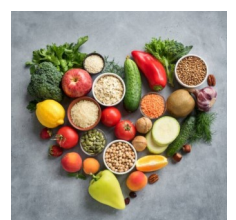


Medications and Professional Consultation

In cases where self-care techniques may not be enough, seeking medical guidance is crucial. Consulting with a healthcare professional can lead to a proper diagnosis and, if necessary, the prescription of appropriate medications. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) may help manage morning stiffness for some individuals. For those with inflammatory arthritis, biologics have shown promising results in reducing stiffness and overall discomfort.

A Comprehensive Approach to Wellness

Incorporating lifestyle changes into daily routines can significantly impact morning stiffness. Adequate exercise, maintaining a healthy weight, managing stress, and ensuring proper nutrition are all vital elements of a comprehensive approach to wellness. Embracing these factors alongside tailored medical treatment can improve joint health and overall well-being.



A New Perspective on Causes

While understanding the underlying causes is crucial, a fresh perspective involves recognising other potential factors contributing to morning stiffness. Beyond arthritis, several health conditions can lead to this discomfort, including thyroid disease, vitamin D deficiency, fibromyalgia, and obesity. Exploring these possibilities with arthritis evaluations can offer a more comprehensive understanding of each individual's unique situation.

Other topics in the article include:

- ◆ Preparation for a smooth morning — e.g. prepare breakfast the night before
- ◆ Heat therapy
- ◆ Exercise and movement
- ◆ The role of massage
- ◆ Exploring topical products
- ◆ Incorporating assistive devices.



Conclusion

Morning stiffness need not be an unwelcome guest in your daily life. With a holistic approach to wellness, incorporating self-care techniques, targeted exercises, and potential medical interventions, embracing each morning with renewed vitality and flexibility is possible. By understanding the various contributing factors and adopting a fresh perspective, we can tackle morning stiffness head-on, making the most of each day easily and comfortably.

Your healthcare team

An extract from Arthritis Australia's information sheet "Working with your healthcare team" © 2007, reviewed July 2024

General practitioner (GP or local / family doctor)

Your GP is usually your first point of contact for any concerns relating to arthritis or any other health issues. You may then be referred on to a specialist for further diagnosis and/or treatment. Some GP practices may have a practice nurse who can assist with information and coordination of your health care.

Medical specialists

These include rheumatologists and orthopaedic surgeons, both specializing in diagnosis and treatment of joint, muscle and bone disorders. Referrals from GPs are essential .

Allied health professionals

These include: physiotherapists, dieticians, exercise physiologists, occupational therapists, psychologists and rheumatology nurses. Your GP may be able to prepare a Medicare funded Care Plan for you, enabling you to have five sessions per year.

Otherwise allied health professionals may be consulted privately without any referral.

Community Outreach: Information and Support

Thanks to the NT Government Community Benefit Fund for funding this two-part project.

Alice Springs visit

At the invitation of Healthy Living NT, AONT made a visit to Alice Springs, to contribute to their Healthy Ageing program, Strong.AS. Our experience at AONT is that it is often the discomfort and disability of arthritis which impacts on managing many other conditions.

While Healthy Living's primary focus is education relating to diabetes and cardiac health, the reality is that many of us have several chronic conditions to manage and this was a wonderful opportunity to extend our reach and broaden people's knowledge. Travel and accommodation expenses are well outside our regular budget, so a grant from the Community Benefit Fund was much appreciated.



Partial IT upgrade



Laptop computer and data projector.

These are the "Tools of the trade" used in delivering presentations which are part of self-management workshops, and the time had come for an upgrade. These portable items are particularly handy for delivering sessions off base.



healthylivingNT  Life Be in it 

Strong.AS

WORKSHOPS

Conducted by  **Arthritis & Osteoporosis NT**  **Healthy Living NT**
Jock Nelson Centre
7/16 Hartley St

**JUNE 18**

Session 1: 10.00am | 1.5 hrs
Understanding & managing arthritis/osteoporosis

Session 2: 1.30pm | 3 hrs (includes 15 min break)
Self management of chronic pain

**JUNE 19**

Session: 10.00am | 2 hrs
Taking the first step to becoming more active

Register your interest now:
hpassp@healthylivingnt.org.au | 08 8952 8000



Community engagement

Health Expo at Darwin High school — 30 May 2025

Each year the school invites a wide range of community organisations and services to provide information stands creating an opportunity for students to meet representatives from a wide range of health, social support and recreation activities.

The focus of our stall was the skeletal system, with an emphasis on healthy lifestyle choices that promote **good bone and joint health**. About 70 students stopped at our stand asking questions, collecting information and participating in a quiz on the skeletal system.



Right: Charles Darwin University Students taking a selfie with Mr Skeleton while taking a break from staffing their information stand.



Welcome to new board members

Frieda Evans

I have lived in Darwin since 1978 and have seen many changes in that time. I decided to join the board as it is an important organisation and it provides a unique service. In early 2024 Ruth G gave a presentation at a meeting of another association I am active with and I joined soon thereafter. I have also known Ruth Q for many years as we were both librarians in our working lives. Since retiring I have changed the organisations I volunteer with so they align more with my personal interests. In this case I am starting to get arthritis so find the newsletters, workshops and recipes, etc. useful, AONT fits in this space.

Helgi Stone

AONT supported me a few years ago when I had a major medical issue. It was really distressing and I was really glad to find a friendly local group I could talk to re my issues and get some practical advice from.

Now I want to help keep AONT going and develop its services.

I previously worked as a pharmacist (no longer registered) and for NTG for Medicines and Poisons (regulation and policy). Retired from all that now.

Currently working part time with my son and husband in the family plumbing business.

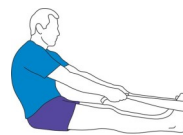
More vacancies: We have plenty of room for more Board Members. If you are interested, come and visit a Board Meeting to meet us and see what we do! Usually the 3rd Wednesday of each month for just one hour, starting at 3:30pm.

Exercises for the feet, ankles and toes

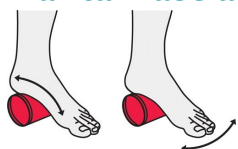
From **Versus Arthritis**, the UK equivalent of **Arthritis Australia**

Achilles tendon and plantar fascia stretch

Loop a towel around the ball of your foot and pull your toes towards your body, keeping your knee straight. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat three times on each foot.



Plantar fascia stretch

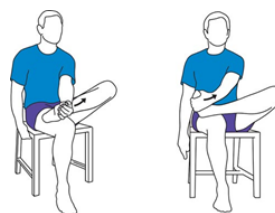


Sit down and rest the arch of your foot on a round object, such as a tin of beans. Roll your foot on the tin in all directions for a few minutes.

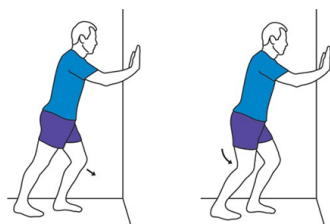
Repeat this exercise twice a day.

Sitting plantar fascia stretch

Sit down and cross one foot over your knee. Grab the base of your toes and pull them back towards your body, until you feel a comfortable stretch. Hold for 15-20 seconds. Repeat this three times.



Wall push



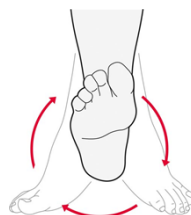
(a) Facing a wall, put both hands on the wall at shoulder height and place one foot in front of the other. The front foot should be around 30cm (12 inches) from the wall. With the front knee bent and the back knee straight, bend the front knee towards the wall, until the calf in your back leg feels tight. Relax and repeat 10 times.

(b) Repeat (a) but bring the back foot forward a little, so that the back knee is slightly bent. Repeat this 10 times.

Ankle range of motion and rotation of motion



Bend your ankle up towards your body as far as possible, then point your toes away from your body. Repeat this 10 times.



Move your ankle around slowly in a circle. Do this 10 times one way, then repeat in the opposite direction.

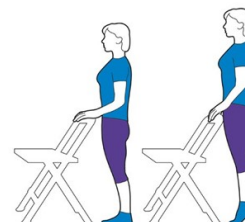
Towel pickup



Sit down with a towel on the floor in front of you. Keeping your heel on the ground, pick up the towel by scrunching it between your toes. Repeat 10 to 20 times. As you improve, add a small weight, such as a tin of beans, to the towel.

Standing heel raise

Using a counter or chair for support, rise up on your tiptoes, with your knees straight. Slowly lower your feet back down. Repeat this 10 times.



Toe spread

With your feet resting on the floor, spread your toes apart as far as possible. Hold for five seconds. Repeat this exercise 10 times.



Alphabet writing

While sitting down, write the alphabet in the air with your big toe, by only moving your ankle. Try to write the whole alphabet twice a day.



<https://www.versusarthritis.org/about-arthritis/exercising-with-arthritis/exercises-for-healthy-joints/exercises-for-the-toes-feet-and-ankles/>

Movement for Life Physio offering GLA:D

An exercise program developed for people with hip or knee osteoarthritis

GLA:D® ('Good Life with osteoArthritis in Denmark') is an education and exercise program reflecting the latest evidence in osteoarthritis (OA) research.

Contact Movement for Life on 89453799 to get details of classes and cost. Go to their website <https://www.movementforlifephysio.com.au/glad> for more information about the program.

People can use a Chronic Disease Management Plan from their GP with the initial assessment and review appointments to claim a rebate which reduces the cost of the program considerably.

Onero Exercise Classes for Osteoporosis

Now available in Darwin

Onero™ is a high intensity resistance and impact exercise program to strengthen bone and muscle based on the latest research. The program is especially designed for people with low bone mass. It has been shown to increase bone mass, improve strength and balance and reduce the risk of fractures.

Jaye Whatley, Physiotherapist at Physio on Wickham is now an accredited Onero practitioner and is running classes twice weekly, on Tuesdays and Fridays, at Rich Life Studios in Cullen Bay.

All participants must have an Initial Assessment (\$110) before beginning the classes to ascertain any pain or injuries, record baseline strength, balance and posture and to teach the correct exercise techniques.

Classes cost \$32 and may be claimed on private health insurance physiotherapy cover.

For more information and to book an assessment contact Jaye:

physio@physioonwickham.com.au 0433 318651

**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

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arthritis.osteoporosis.nt](https://facebook.com/arthritis.osteoporosis.nt)

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We are open

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(excluding Public Holidays)

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Amin Islam

Secretary

Hilary Fowler

**Treasurer and Public
Officer**

Ruth Garden

Ordinary Board Members

Lyn Skipper
Helgi Stone
Frieda Evans

What We Do

Our work includes:

- Responding to walk in and telephone enquiries Repeat this 10 times
- 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

Membership

Welcome to new members.

For current members, renewals fall due on 1st July and personalized renewal notices will be sent out with the next newsletter. All members are welcome to contact the office with suggestions or queries regarding our newsletter and activities in general.



Membership income is a valuable contribution to our sustainability.

... **for your support**



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